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SCHOOL BOARDS' POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL LAW IN SASKATCHEWAN - 1976 to 1979

by

© TERENCE ROBERT GASIOR

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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SCHOOL BOARDS' POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL LAW IN SASKATCHEWAN - 1976 to 1979

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1985

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Submitted by TERENCE ROBERT GASIOR in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DEDICATION

for jan

ABSTRACT

The study contained in this dissertation described the political activities of sixteen school boards in Saskatchewan from January, 1976 to December, 1979. During that time period the Government of Saskatchewan undertook to revise and consolidate school law in the province. Efforts were made to relate the political activities of the school boards to the final regulative output - The Education Act.

School board chairmen, their officials, and nominees were interviewed in order to determine in what political activities boards had engaged. Sixteen school boards' minutes were scrutinized in order to ascertain the historical record of boards' political activities. Results of the interviews and examination of records were used to answer eight sub-problems outlined in the dissertation. A conceptual framework consisted of a modified model of the performance of the political system.

Findings suggested that the political activities among school boards were minimal. Large boards and one medium board participating in the study tended to be more active politically than small school boards. They tended to place demands and supports on the political system and to articulate their interests; however, the general conclusion based on the findings was that school boards' influence on the development of The Education Act was negligible. Because

most participating boards did nothing to make their demands about changes to school law known to the government, their colleagues, or the public, they could have no influence on the development of school law.

All interviewees were able to identify sections of the White Paper and The Education Act with which they were dissatisfied. Because boards generally did not express their dissatisfactions through political activity the conclusion was made that boards may not be representing the interests and needs of their electors.

Trustees were divided in their opinions about whether the Act affects their ability to govern education at the local level. The conclusion was drawn that The Education Act has shifted responsibility for some aspects of education to school boards but has simultaneously reduced their power to govern.

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The study contained in this dissertation has been organized into several chapters, sections, and sub-sections. Chapter 1 contains an overview of the study, statements of its purpose and the problem, and its significance. Chapter 2 contains a review of related literature and the study's conceptual framework. Chapter 3 addresses the methodology used to collect data for the study. Chapter 4 contains the study's findings. Chapter 5 contains conclusions derived from the findings and Chapter 6 contains implications and a review of the framework of the study.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

For some years prior to January, 1979, Ministers of Education of the Province of Saskatchewan considered making changes to Saskatchewan's educational legislation. Up to that date, education for public and separate schools had been governed by many statutes and after that date, fifteen of the Acts had been revised, reworded, reconstructed, and consolidated into one comprehensive piece of legislation named The Education Act.

Reiderer and Toombs (1969:41) noted that, collectively, trustees believe that inappropriate laws affecting education should be changed but that inappropriateness should be determined jointly by the provincial government and school boards. Such co-determination might be interpreted to mean that boards undertake various activities in order to ensure that a joint effort leads to changes they desire.

The writer's interest in doing this study stemmed largely from an interest in knowing whether school boards in Saskatchewan did participate in the development of revised and consolidated school law. Hence, the purpose of this study was to examine the participation of school boards and relate it to the boards' influence on the revision and consolidation of school law in Saskatchewan.

THE PROBLEM AND SUB-PROBLEMS

The Problem

The problem for this study was to determine what specific political activities school boards, their officials, and other interested, knowledgeable persons acting on the boards' behalf undertook from January 1, 1976 to December 31, 1979, in an effort to influence the development of a White Paper on education and Saskatchewan's Education Act.

Sub-Problems

This study's sub-problems were developed using the concept of political activity which Miller (1967:14) defined as an "act intended to bring about or resist change."

1. What demands did school boards, their officials, and other knowledgeable persons in Saskatchewan put on the political system during the time of development of the White Paper on revision and consolidation of the province's educational legislation?

2. What participant supports did school boards, their officials, and other knowledgeable persons add to the political system in order to enhance their demands?

3. How did school boards, their officials, and other knowledgeable persons articulate their interests with respect to revision and consolidation of the province's educational legislation?

4. Are school boards, their officials, and other knowledgeable persons satisfied or dissatisfied with The Education Act, or with specific sections of the Act, as it relates to governance and control of education in Saskatchewan?

5. What alterations do school boards, their officials, and other knowledgeable individuals believe the regulative output, i.e., The Education Act, has had on boards' ability to govern and control education in Saskatchewan?

6. What demands and interest articulations have school boards, their officials, and other knowledgeable persons placed on the political system since enactment of The Education Act?

7. What future demands and interest articulations do school boards, their officials, and other knowledgeable persons plan to place on the political system in regard to The Education Act?

8. What influence did school boards, their officials, and other knowledgeable individuals have on the revision and consolidation of school law in Saskatchewan?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Significance for Theory

Kerlinger (1974:7) wrote that

> ...science is an activity that contributes systematized information to the world. The scientist's job is to discover new facts and add them to the already existing body of information.... Science, in this view, is also a way of explaining observed phenomena. The emphasis, then, is on the present state of knowledge* and on the present set of laws, hypotheses, and principles.

Research should be undertaken with an aim to add to the theory and knowledge from which the purposes of the study are derived. This statement is iterated by Borg and Gall (1971:2) who wrote that the value in doing research "lies in developing theory and knowledge so that the answers it does

---

* Italics in original

provide are sound and lead to real gains". From the present study new facts may emerge which help describe relationships between:

1. school boards' demands and interest articulation and their influence on the process of change in educational legislation,

2. the impact of educational legislation change on governance of education.

Significance for Practice

Borg and Gall (1971:3) stated that

> the science of education remains weak in theoretical foundation, but a sufficient body of theory has now been developed or borrowed from other behavioural sciences to permit sound approaches to some practical problems of education.

The proposed research may have practical relevance for other provincial or state governments which are contemplating large-scale revisions of their laws governing education. The study may also provide profitable insight into the operation of local school boards in light of new legislation, particularly legislation that is perceived to have a bearing on board members' power to govern. The study may have significance for educational administrators who work in the political milieu. It may also have some practical relevance for political scientists in that it may offer insight into the nature of the political process as it applies to school trustees who act in a political manner. Finally, the study may shed some light on whether school boards have influence on a provincial government's legislative mandate.

DELIMINATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. This study was confined to the Province of Saskatchewan.

2. This study was based upon:

(a) analysis of data collected in Saskatchewan by interviews with school trustees and school board officials who are knowledgeable about the revision and consolidation of educational legislation in the province;

(b) examination of school board minutes which contain references to school board activities relevant to the purposes of the study.

3. The only legislation referred to in the study is that of Saskatchewan, and the British North America Act.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study used a questionnaire as the basic tool to collect data. While the technique is considered a sound one for the purposes of the study it may have some inherent limitations associated with it.

1. Data gathered from individuals, trustees, officials, or other knowledgeable people may not reflect attitudes of the entire population. This limitation affects the generalizability of findings.

2. The data represent opinions of individuals at only one point in time. This single view may be different for the same individuals at another time. Attitudes toward The

Education Act may change over time and responses to any given question vary accordingly.

3. Information that is not known to individuals cannot be obtained. Thus, respondents whose knowledge of the political activity of their school boards is minimal or non-existent cannot participate fully in a question/answer session.

4. Information which respondents do not consider salient cannot be obtained. The presence of board members on boards during the time period under study does not ensure their interest in issues relevant to the study.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1 contains the purpose of the study, the statement of problem and statements of sub-problems. The theoretical and practical significances for doing the study are stated and the limitations and delimitations made.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter contains a review of literature related to the present study. A brief description of the meaning of law is followed by summaries of works on politics, policy, governance and control of education, and interest groups. A description is given of the components of Almond and Powell's performance of a political system that are specifically relevant to the study. Chapter 2 also contains the conceptual framework for the study.

LAWS

Hart (1978) described laws as rules of social conduct. He said too (1978:53) that, while in a modern democracy the "qualifications of the lawmakers are highly complex and relate to the composition of the legislature, lawmakers have the legal* right to construct any laws as they see fit and that members of society are obliged to follow

* The emphasis is Hart's

them." In a modern democracy people are free to express their opinions as to what laws they want or do not want enacted and they are free to try to convince lawmakers to develop laws consonant with their views on social order. As a consequence, the legal right to make whatever law is seen fit is tempered by the interests of people who are able to express their opinions convincingly to the lawmakers.

Gifis (1975:116) called a law "the legislative pronouncement of the rules of society which should guide one's action in society." Garber and Edwards (1962:10) said that a state

> commonly expresses its educational policy through legislation enacted by the state, which determines the ends to be achieved and the means to be employed.

Woodward (1974:50) decided that "legislative actions are those that give rise to statements of policy and provide for their execution by the administration," and Rodgers (1973:638) noted, perhaps somewhat cynically, that

> only in recent years have scholars attempted to determine the ultimate consequences of laws. Even members of the Supreme Court...admit they lack knowledge of the final consequences of their decisions. There are two important consequences:
>
> 1. the lack of such knowledge has frequently led to grossly inaccurate evaluations of the role of existing laws as well as unrealistic expectations concerning the impact of new laws; and
>
> 2. at times such evaluations hindered social progress because it was believed that change had been achieved when in fact it had not.

Law and changes to it guide and affect every member of society. One might expect that school boards would be

interested in law that pertains to education and educational policy particularly when changes to the law are imminent. Boards might, during a process of change "vigorously resist any increase in control over them and, equally vigorously campaign for extension of their own powers." (Enns, 1966:23).

POLICY AND POLICY MAKING

Policy

Dye (1972) said "policy is whatever government chooses to do." Easton (1965) called it the "authoritative allocation of values". Kaplan (1964:400) considered it to be a "projected program of goals, values, and practices". Dye (1972) noted that "public policies may be regulative, organizational, distributive, or extractive." Taylor (1980:1) called policy

> the documented decisions of the policy making system and is used to guide future actions within the organizational system. Policy making systems overlap as a consequence of actors participating in more than one system.

Steers (1977:139) said that "policy governs to a large extent the formal activities of an organization." He went on to say that policy "provides guidelines for routine decision-making, improves interdepartmental co-ordination, facilitates continuity of action over time and reduces the chances that earlier mistakes will be repeated." But, he warned (1977:140) policies can have negative effects, where they lead to "red tape" or "where they stymie efforts at innovation and adaptation to a changing environment."

In his study, Stringham (1974:11), described megapolicies as master policies which "involve determination of postures, assumptions and main guidelines to be followed by discrete or specific policies." According to Dror, (1971a:63) megapolicies are "distinct from detailed discrete policies, though these two pure types are on a continuum with many in between cases." Dror (1971a:74) used the term megapolicy to mean "policy on how to make policy." Wright (1979:38) used Stringham's and Dror's descriptions to create the following description of educational legislation:

> A megapolicy role of educational legislation has three interlocking frameworks, each of which appears to impinge upon different levels of the system in a different way.
>
> A legal framework emerges, emanating from the ministerial level. One may conclude that this framework is determinant of why something must be done, not in educational terms, but in terms of legal prescription in the form of provincial authority.
>
> A procedural framework seems to be evident, impinging largely on the local board level. One may conclude that this framework is determinant of a set of procedures for how something shall be done.
>
> The framework which embodies what is to be done seems to impinge largely on the school level, the level of operations, and have been termed an operational framework. One may conclude that this framework is descriptive of what educational tasks are, or may be carried out in schools.

The why, how, and what become important policy matters at a time of pending change to legislation that guides educational authority, procedure, or tasks. School boards that have an interest in, say, gaining greater authority perhaps in relation to determining how and what shall be done at local

levels of the education system, might attempt to influence the changes in legislation so as to give them this authority. As Wright (1979:38) noted:

> As well as duties, rights, powers, and obligations imposed by the Acts themselves, the legislations are expanded by regulations which derive from the Acts, usually through the authority of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council, or the Minister of Education. Their intention is to deal with the details of the implementation of legislated policy. Overall policy guidelines, therefore, are assumed to be present in the Acts themselves while details are found in the regulations emanating from these Acts.

In discussing decision-making Byrne (1968:10) remarked that policy has created three loci for education's decision-making: the province, the district, and the school.

> Traditionally in Canadian education the Department has made the major decisions about the interna of education - the instructional programme. The district and divisional boards have concerned themselves with the externa - the buildings and staff.

And as Wright concluded

> Local decisions that affect instruction have, according to Bryne, traditionally be made outside the school. Local systems have tended to appear as branch-plant organizations, dominated by Departments or Ministers.

It is interesting to note that of 6,623 decisions made by school boards and analyzed by Renihan (1977) not one decision appeared to be of a political nature or meant to question provincial authority or policy making. As he said (1977:250)

> findings indicate that boards in this study were concerned predominantly with decisions pertaining to staff and financing and the general considerations which relate to their own operation.... Two reasons might explain this

> emphasis. First, these areas might require greater emphasis in school district operation...and, second, boards might consider these as areas in which they have greater legitimate jurisdiction as opposed to other areas.

Such legitimization has to be created for school boards by policies of the provincial government, policies which issue from megapolicies or legislation and specific policies or regulations. Over time legitimization may become "traditional" and boards may become reluctant to challenge the authority of the provincial government: therefore, an opportune time to issue a challenge arises during a period of potential change to educational legislation.

Policy Making

Stringham (1974:186) wrote that

> although legislation is seen as a manifestation of emerging policy, written policy that reflects reality and guides operations is more a need than an actuality.

Bhola (1976:8) considered policy making to be

> a political process concerned with new social outcomes; it is an elitist behaviour. Policy making should always be envisioning new uses of power to create new or qualitatively new power relationships, i.e., new social hierarchies. Conversely, if there is no intent toward creating a new pattern of power relationships then it is not policy that emerges but rules and regulations.

He wrote that "the sole intent of any policy making process is to direct and to harness the social power for social outcome; there is mediation between ideologies and actual social actions for creating new human relationships."

In the political process described above, and as it relates to the development of megapolicy on education,

several actors may become involved: individuals, legislators, professional groups, and school boards. The last-named may be particularly interested in the legislation in view of concerns about control of education.

GOVERNANCE AND CONTROL OF EDUCATION

Russel (1949:54) wrote that a "healthy and progressive society requires both central control and individual and group initiative; without control there is anarchy, and without initiative there is stagnation."

MacKinnon (1960:4) wrote that "state participation in education stems from the need to provide minimum education to all children regardless of circumstance or location." Initially, participation by the state in matters of education appear to have been to ensure equal opportunity for everyone to receive education. Lipset (1970:22) noted that

> the debate as it is waged over education, is, of course, a special case of the more general controversy concerning local control versus centralization which has occurred in most countries around the world.

Andrews (1970:53) wrote that

> the waxing and waning of local control of education depends only partly on the degree of commitment of the people to an ideology as such. In addition, its fate depends on the practical strategies of accomplishing whatever goals the society is determined to accomplish at the time...the degree of local control in a particular country at any time seems to be much more a means to an end than the term 'ideology' would suggest, or even permit.

He listed four predominating reasons for retaining local control of education:

1. Keeping the local school open no matter how inadequate is often vital to economic prosperity, community pride, and prominence of local school board officials;

2. Local school boards provide for the accommodation of various ethnic and religious differences in educational outlook;

3. Teachers and administrators may pressure school boards to keep local schools open in order to keep enrolments down;

4. Desire to retain relative simplicity of smaller organizations.

But, as Lipset (1960:33) has shown, the 5,000 local school boards that existed in Saskatchewan early in the 1900's have been amalgamated over time by statute because they were "too inefficient and costly to operate."

Hodgson (1976:45) remarked that in Canada "school boards are elected or appointed to administer a number of school matters locally, but there is no doubt that it is the provinces that are in control." He noted that control of education is pretty well defined by statute and that provincial governments control teacher training, teacher certification, curricula, text book selection, inspection of teachers' work, size of administrative units, the length of the school day and year, and the constitution and authority of school boards. School boards engage and pay teachers,

develop pupil transportation systems, and construct schools. Bryce, et al (1979) studied Alberta school boards and concluded that

> control over education has undergone a transition from a strongly decentralized (strong local control) to a relatively strongly centralized (strong provincial control) format. The introduction of universal education was a major factor in the push toward centralizing of control.
>
> Historically and traditionally, although not recognized constitutionally, control in the provinces of Canada has been shared between local and provincial (central) authority.
>
> Conditional grants were an early and pervasive means used by central authorities to exercise control over local jurisdictions.

In deference to Hodgson's (1976) conclusions one can add that the payment by the province of conditional grants to local boards affects their control of teachers' pay, building construction, and pupil transportation systems. Consequently, their control over these matters may frequently depend upon provincial assistance.

As Mathews (1973:46) concluded in his study,

> trustees overwhelmingly believed that the minister had greatest power over capital budget; administrators had greatest power over personnel; teachers had greatest power over quality of education. Boards did not consider themselves to have greatest power in any category of capital budget, operating budget, curriculum, personnel, or quality of education.

In his study Selby (1973:153) found that in Ontario since World War II larger boards of education were granted some measures of autonomy greater than small boards because

"they had relatively free access to resources independent of the Department of Education." He also found (1973:158) that the Department of Education does allow greater autonomy to larger boards because they have "the ability to pay more highly qualified staff, and resources for the higher pay become non-Department sources."

Bryce, et al, (1979) noted that "boards exert some control over: students, curriculum, professional and non-professional personnel, transportation, buildings, and financing." But, Strembitsky (1977:6) was concerned that much of a board's power to manage even these affairs is now in the hands of employees' associations.

Apker (1978:91) offered the following reasons for centralization of control of education:

1. citizen dissatisfaction with public schools;
2. legislatures' increased attentiveness to education;
3. high cost of delivering services to small numbers of people;
4. movement to increased state funding of education.

Wirt (1977:185) claimed that even among the most decentralized states "the state still retains rigid control over gate-keeping functions: accreditation, certification, and attendance requirements." He concluded that

> even on matters of personnel, administration, and finance local boards have very little control because the state creates mandates, minimums, and regulations for these functions.

In summary, the control of many of the essential features of education appears to rest with the provincial governments, that is, to be highly centralized. If this centralized control is to devolve back to local boards, then the boards themselves must be the initiators of change in this direction. They might take note of what MacKinnon (1960:11) said:

> In theory the legislature exercises supreme power; in fact, it can devote only a limited portion of its time and attention to educational matters and relies on others for advice and action.

Perhaps, particularly during time of proposed change to educational legislation that governs what boards of education can do, school boards might be the "others" that the state government relies upon. In Enns' (1963:1) words,

> the school board...is an agency of local government and, together with its officers, forms a part of the whole pattern of government organization and intergovernmental relationships.

Implied in these words is the opportunity, if not obligation, to act politically in the political system of government and intergovernment organizations.

POLITICS

Dahl (1963:6) wrote that a political system is

> any persistent pattern of human relationships that involves to a significant extent power, rule, or authority, and which is complex and stable, and in which are found roles endowed with authority played by persons who create, interpret, and enforce rules that are binding on members of the political system.

Miller (1976:14) described the political situation:

> The essence of a political situation, as opposed to one of agreement and routine, is that someone is trying to do something about which there is no agreement; and is trying to use some form of government as a means and as protection. Political situations arise out of disagreement.
>
> Politics, then, is about disagreement or conflict, and political activity is that which is intended to bring about or resist change....

Easton (1965:21) regarded politics as "those interactions through which values are authoritatively allocated for society." The word interactions "suggests that politics is a dynamic process and that two or more actors are required to have 'politics'." Usdan (1975:56) commented that

> 'authoritatively allocated' suggests that not every member of society, or of a social subsystem, has responsibility for allocating values, but 'authoritatively' needs to be read in conjunction with 'interactions'. In any system of politics the manner in which interaction takes place is of critical importance.

Issues are not always political. Those that are become so because groups which have interest in them develop the interactions spoken of above. In writing about educational decision-making Housego (1972:11) said

> while group theorists do not argue that all policy is the result of conflict among organized pressure groups, they do contend that the opposing conceptions of the "community's" welfare constitute the heart of the political process.

Housego (1972:14) is of the opinion that educational politics is a matter of politics of pressure groups. These groups are limited and select to the extent that

> on major province-wide policy issues settlement rests on the conflict and compromise of a limited number of interest groups - typically the executive of the provincial teachers' and trustees' associations and the senior administrators of the department of education.

One is hard-pressed to conceive of any reason why school boards cannot, except, as Campbell (1976:35) concluded, because of longstanding, traditional apolitical posture, participate in the political process in which is developed legislation that governs their activities.

INTEREST GROUPS AND PRESSURE GROUPS

According to Nie and Verba (1975:1), "political participation means acts that aim at influencing governmental decisions." Influence can be attributed to pressure groups and interest groups. Various writers, summarized next, attribute different meanings to these terms of "interest and pressure" but in this study they are used synonymously.

Doerr (1973:232) said that

> the function of 'interest groups', whether a large association or a small number of individuals, in the policy making process is essentially one of influencing the behaviour of government decision-makers. Group pressures are brought to bear on the government through a variety of strategies and tactics which come under the general heading of 'lobbying'.... Moreover, interest groups, in the process of attempting to influence political decision-makers can, and do, provide large amounts of information and intelligence needed by government officials.... It is extremely important, therefore, that as many groups and individuals representing as many different interests in society as possible be involved in this process.

Doerr's study looked at White papers. What she found, among other findings, was

> the activities of these [interest] groups contributed to the White Paper debate in a number of ways. In the first instance, they served an informational function, not only in promulgating the government's proposals, but also in providing informed commentary and criticism. Secondly, they provided assistance to the Government by acting as extra-bureaucratic research organizations.

What Doerr (1973:250) concluded was that

> although a large number of groups and individuals became involved in the public debate [on tax reform] only a small percentage actually had any impact on the government's final decision. Nevertheless, the debate did stimulate widespread interest in the discussions and proposals.

Doerr's work does not specify that if interest groups are to participate in the political process, then government must allow time for their participation. In Saskatchewan, the enactment of The Education Act followed several years of investigation of proposed changes to school law. As noted in the White Paper on Consolidation and Revision of School Law in Saskatchewan (1977:1) interest groups in that province had from March 1, 1976 to June 30, 1976 and from March, 1977 to the presentation of Bill 22 to the Legislature in 1978 to participate in the revision of the law.

Chapin and Deneau (1978) assessed the policy making process in Canada and concluded that

> white papers are a relatively recent phenomenon in Canada.... They are used as a means of presenting government policy preferences prior to the introduction of legislation.... The publication of a white paper serves to test the climate of public opinion regarding a controversial policy issue and enables the government to gauge its probable impact.

In his study of the revision of Alberta school law, Stringham (1974:84) pointed out that the Alberta School Trustees Association passed a resolution in November, 1968:

> That the School Act be rewritten in its entirety by a special work group appointed by the Minister of Education and representatives of the various bodies interested in education in Alberta.

Bryne (1970:26) had remarked that the Minister of Education appointed the committee in 1969 to consider the following objectives:

1. to consolidate the School Act,
2. to rewrite the legislation so as to improve its clarity,
3. to transfer many of the items of decision-making from the rigidity of legislation to the rule of the local school board,
4. to enhance the role of the local school board,
5. to commit a greater number of decisions affecting local school operations to the negotiation process between school boards and staffs.

The School Act was, as Stringham (1970:1) remarked

> proclaimed on August 1, 1970, an event which marked the completion of 20 months of intense political action by those persons and groups who influence the direction of education in the Province.

While individuals from the Alberta School Trustees Association, the Alberta Teachers Association, and other educational groups were appointed to the review committee no one from individual school boards in Alberta appears to have been appointed.

Chapin and Deneau (1978:41) pointed out that

> in attempting to influence government decision-makers, citizens' organizations must be able to demonstrate some degree of public support for their proposals.... Government responsiveness is ultimately related to public pressure or readiness for change and citizen organizations can take advantage of many opportunities to highlight the importance of their concerns for the well-being of Canadian society.

Pye (1963:63) believed that the structure of the communications systems and the processes of political demand making determined the basic characteristics of political culture. Presthus (1973:141) thought that

> interest groups...have an essentially political role which is to integrate and articulate collective social demands for presentation to governmental elite through a process of negotiation and consultation.

In his earlier study, Presthus (1971:447) noted that seventy percent of MP's interact with interest group representatives twice a week or twice a month. Further (at 451), he remarked that of all the media used to interact with MP's they imputed the most significance to formal meetings and the least significant to social affairs and telephone calls. And, (at 453) Presthus wrote that

> MP's perceive as the most common interest group function that of using sympathetic MP's to persuade policy makers to do the interest groups' bidding. The interest groups are, in a sense, outsiders and if they are to be influential they must penetrate to the policy levels of government via the persuasion technique.

Finally, he noted (1971:459) that the "most effective interest-group stratagem...is the mobilization of public support for a given issue."

Pross (1975a:1) said that pressure groups are an essential part of Canadian politics.

> They create day-to-day connections between public officials and private citizens.... Their advice and support contribute to the creation of acceptable public policy and give it legitimacy in the community.... Pressure groups are organizations whose members act

> together to influence public policy in order to promote their common interest. The chief characteristic of the pressure group is the fact that it tries to persuade governments to pursue the policies it advocates.

In an earlier work, Pross (1975a:150) explained that pressure groups provide input to civil service consideration of policy. But, he noted (1975a:168) that the civil service has the dominant role in pressure group/civil service interaction:

> 1. the civil service has an ear to the politicians whose final say is law.
>
> 2. the civil service determines who is "friendly" and who is "unfriendly".

But, Pross (1975:122) suggested that

> the pressure group in general must be treated as integral to the political system. It follows that, because pressure groups occupy a significant and unique place in political systems, their patterns of behaviour will in turn influence many other parts of the system.... Effective interaction with the Canadian political system...has depended on the cultivation of access to public decision-makers....

Pross (1975:126) then concluded one portion of his argument by describing how pressure groups could "capture national attention and create a climate of public opinion favourable to a desired course of government action":

> The radio talk show, the telephone, computers, changes to photocopying techniques have contributed to a heightened awareness of common interests and to a new case of information dispersal, and thus to a tendency for groups of citizens to organize for political communication. Moreover, television is inexpensive, far-reaching, and an authoritative communications centre.

School boards as pressure groups do not, the literature appears to say, enjoy much visibility.

Aufderheide (1976:201) remarked that teachers' associations tended to be "the most influential of the education lobbyists. School boards often rank themselves more influential, contrary to the legislators." In their study Campbell and Mazzoni (1976) asked state legislators to list perceived weaknesses of boards of education as lobbyists. Among the responses were:

1. no direct channels of communication between the board and legislature;
2. "invisibility" of boards to the legislature;
3. board members lack expertise.

In addition, Campbell and Mazzoni (1976:37) found that 57% of legislators claimed never to have been contacted by a board of education member. Ninety percent said only one or two board members had attempted contact. Most boards of education were not viewed as significant actors in the political arena and 75% of legislators said boards were unimportant in the political process.

In Francis' (1971:703) study when legislators were asked to identify the most powerful pressure groups in their states, 94% of the 3,000 respondents referred to businessmen, professionals, labourers, farmers, and government officials. School boards were mentioned only nine times in 3,000.

In summary, while the practice of school boards acting as interest or pressure groups on the political system may appear marginal nothing in law or social contract seems to preclude their trying to influence the system.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this study was modified from Almond and Powell's (1978) account of the performance of a political system. This model was chosen rather than Easton's withinputs model because it is contemporary and suited the needs of the study. Figure 1 depicts the model. Fundamental elements are described next. The importance of elements omitted is neither denied nor limited but their use was peripheral to the study.

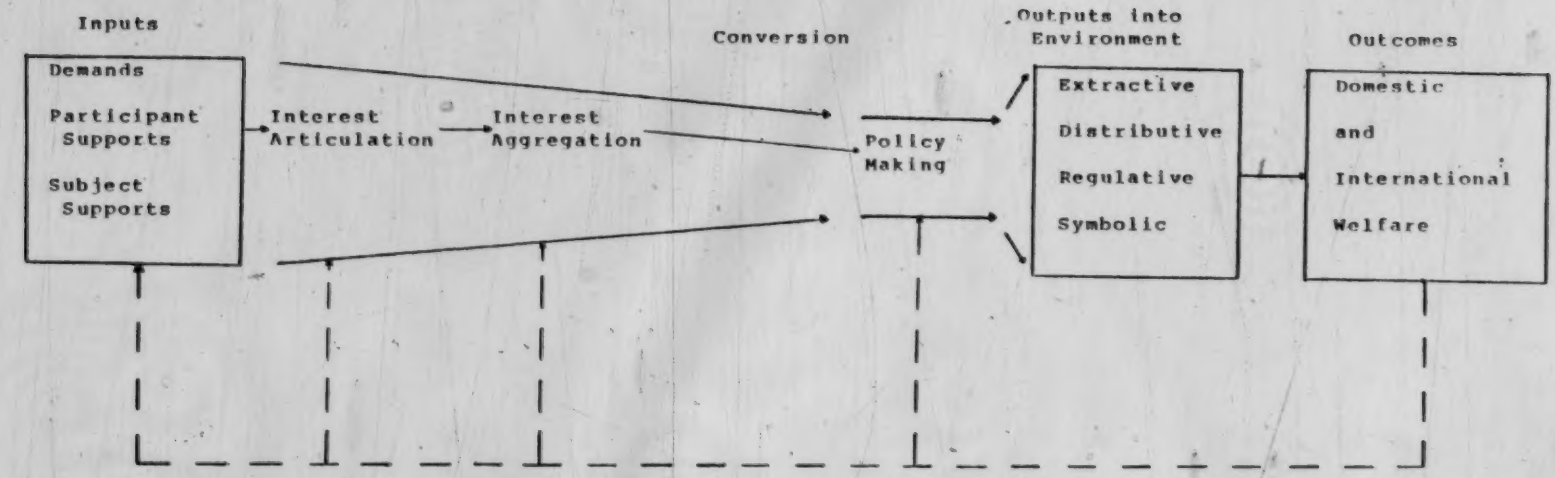
Demands

Almond and Powell (1978:9) have said the demands enter the political system from the environment. Environmental changes can provoke ordinarily complacent individuals to react when they suspect that the changes will affect them. These reactions can take the form of demands directed to government members or the bureaucratic elite either by interested individuals or by interest groups on their behalf. A demand is a request to implement policy of which the interested parties approve. The basis for political activity arises because not all interest groups' demands can be satisfied. Government ministers may invite interested groups to submit demands in response to some proposed government activity.

Chapin and Deneau (1978:40) advised groups who wish to influence government policy to be "well-prepared both in

FIGURE 1

The Performance of Political Systems



terms of their approaches to decision-makers and in their knowledge of issues involved...." In attempting to influence government decision-makers

> citizens' organizations must be able to demonstrate some degree of public support for their [demands]...and government responsiveness is intimately related to public pressure or readiness for change....

And, finally, these writers remarked that efforts to express demands which are not "accompanied by...efforts to educate the public through media and other communication channels are less likely to succeed."

Regulative Outputs

Regulative outputs of a political system refer, Almond and Powell (1978:307) said, to "exercise of control by a political system over the behaviour of individuals and groups in a society." Constitutionally in Canada, as Hogg (1979:60) noted, matters pertaining to education are assigned to the provinces, thus, they have legitimate competence to create regulative outputs which control their education systems.

According to Almond and Powell (1978:308) regulative outputs are characterized by

1. some degree of control over various aspects of human behaviour and interaction;
2. some indication of a limit to procedural enforcement; and
3. a description of the sanctions used to ensure enforcement.

School boards exist solely at the pleasure of the provincial legislature but while their powers are defined by law the passage of time and the essence of political convention may promote entrenchment of a traditional balance of functional power between the provincial government and the school boards. Trustees may become so accustomed to the traditional characteristics of the regulative outputs which guide operations in their school districts that impending changes to them might cause alarm and generate articulation of demands.

Almond and Powell (1978:311) also remarked that in a modern society regulative outputs can change from time to time. Minor changes may be seen as inconsequential so that interest in them is marginal. But sweeping changes to a province's educational legislation may be seen as so altering the traditional fabric of the governance of education that interest in them is pronounced and persons to be affected by them might conceivably attempt to influence the direction of the changes.

Outcomes

Almond and Powell (1978:16) called outcomes the consequences of policy outputs. One consequence of revision and consolidation of educational legislation could be a shift in the point on the continuum of control of education to either more local control or more centralized control. Changes in regulative outputs and their implementation

produce both intended and unintended outcomes. Almond and Powell (1978:322) remarked that

> even the immediate outcome of public policy deviates from the intended outcome, since factors beyond the control of politicians and bureaucrats are at play, and since their capacity to effect desired outcomes is limited by partial and inadequate understanding of social, economic and international process.

One possible outcome of public policy is a demand, one which may or may not be anticipated by the politicians and bureaucrats. Values and social norms affect the nature of outputs as well as ineluctably influence the nature of outcomes. Expectations about the role of politics in shaping outputs mediate between outcomes flowing from political, economic, and social processes and the demands and supports flowing into the political system. Revisions and consolidation to educational legislation may be outputs of the political system which are perceived to tamper with traditionalistic views held by trustees about education, and the consequent outcomes may be in the form of intense demand articulation designed to discourage, or at least redirect, the changes.

Interest Articulation

As Pross (1975:6) noted "pressure groups perform communication and legitimation functions." He continued to say that the

> communications function is central. It embraces the transmittal of every type of politically relevant information, from highly technical data to the protestation of outraged citizenry. Because these communications activities are usually initiated by groups

> outside government, we tend to think of pressure groups as devices for transmitting demands to government.

School boards are created by provincial legislation. They definitely operate independently of the government even though they exist at its pleasure. Pitman (1972:11) described two major needs of school board members. One was to improve their own effectiveness in understanding local needs of education. A second was to develop a professional advisory committee capable of communicating their advice regarding local needs to the minister of education.

Almond and Powell (1978:169) called the communication of advice to the government one form of the process of interest articulation. They stated that

> the political process is set in motion when some group or individual makes a political demand. This process of demand making is called interest articulation.... In a modern political system are found associations organized primarily to facilitate interest articulation....

An advisory committee which communicates local educational demands to the provincial government is acting as an interest articulation group. But a statement of a demand is not an assurance that the committee's demand will be recognized by the policy making body. As Almond and Powell (1978:232) remarked effective political demands are those which

> are advocated by political contenders who have resources - votes, seats in the legislative body, influential positions in government and private life, money, technical knowledge and expertise, control over the media of communication, or means of coercion.

Thus, while Saskatchewan school boards are conceivably interest articulating groups, their success in influencing

the development of legislation depends on so many factors as to preclude automatic influence.

Usdan (1975:271) thought that the public no longer

> actually controls its schools through the elected officials or appointed officials who serve on school boards.

Because of the increasing complexity and what he termed "the blighting concept that 'bigger is better'" citizen control over many branches of government has diminished. In referring to schools as essential to the maintenance and cohesion of society, Usdan (1975:272) was especially concerned about reduced local influence in educational policy making. Usdan clearly advocates continued use of school boards to provide some element of control of educational functions. Such control will stem, in part, from the influence which boards have, possibly through the trustees' associations, on the provincial government. Positive influence will ride with successful demand articulation. With respect to revision and consolidation of law governing education, school boards, and their organized associations, will influence the changes only if they create demands and communicate them to the government which acts to produce the changes.

Pross (1975:6) considered interest articulators to be essential to Canadian politics. They create day-to-day connections between public and private people and facilitate the implementation of government decisions. The articulation

of demands requires definite commitment of resources, time, and effort if it is to be a successful political activity. Chant (1975:67) remarked that interest articulators must talk to people at the top levels of government and private business - cabinet ministers, heads of agencies, and company presidents - or their demands will go unnoticed and not acted upon.

Peripheral Aspects of the Model

Some aspects of Almond and Powell's model of the performance of political systems were peripheral to the needs of the framework of this study. They are described next only to show their relationships with those aspects of the model central to the framework.

Subject supports. Easton (1950:390) said that articulating demands requires energy "in the form of actions or orientations promoting or resisting a political system...". Money, material support, attention to government communication, and the manifestation of deference or respect for authority and ceremony are examples of subject support.

Interest aggregation. Almond and Powell (1978:14) considered interest aggregation to be the second function of the process level of the political system. At this stage articulated demands are condensed into major policy alternatives which are supported by votes, money, media attention, and so on.

Policy making. The third process level of the political system is policy making. At this stage "the

authoritative goals of the political system are enacted" according to formal or informal rules that define the sites of political power (Almond and Powell, 1978:245).

Extractive outputs. All political systems extract resources of some kind from individuals who form a society. In the operation of a school board, trustees are required to perform certain duties if they are to remain in office. Taxes are paid to support the educational system. The extent of these extractive performances is determined through political and bureaucratic resolution.

Distributive outputs. While extraction describes who pays, distribution indicates who benefits. An educational system supposedly benefits all of society as it prepares future resource givers for a place in it. In the short-term, the system benefits the young who take advantage of it.

Symbolic outputs. Political speech and political rite and ritual are symbolic outputs. Thus, a government promise to increase spending on education might be symbolically interpreted to mean that the government supports the on-going levels and present kinds of service. A promise to revise and consolidate educational legislation might be symbolic iconoclasm or not.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 2

Chapter 2 contains the review of literature related to the present study. The review included descriptive

discussion on the meaning of law. Summaries of work on politics, policy, governance of education, and interest and pressure groups led to the choice of conceptual framework for the study. Almond and Powell's model of the performance of a political system was modified to be the study's framework.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains a review of the methodology used to gather data pertinent to the study. It is organized into descriptions of sampling and data collection techniques.

Sampling

Borg and Gall (1977:114) wrote that needs exist to use appropriate sampling techniques with which to select research respondents. First, research findings "should be generalizable to some degree beyond the sample used in the study" or the research will not produce new knowledge. Second, a properly selected sample helps to ensure that "research data approximate the data that would be obtained if the entire population were studied."

Population. A population consists, according to Borg and Gall (1977:115), of "all the members of a real or hypothetical set of persons, events, or objects." The population relevant to this study was a set of school boards located in the Province of Saskatchewan. The population was identified by checking the 1981 Directory of School Officials published by Saskatchewan Education. This

directory contains a listing of all school boards, their members, and school board officials in the province.

Sample size. A sample of persons, events, or objects is chosen from a defined population and represents it. By using a small sample from a large population Borg and Gall (1977:115) noted that a researcher "saves time and expenses of studying the entire population." The sample size used in this study was sixteen school boards selected in the manner described following.

Sampling technique. Saskatchewan is organized into 123 school divisions (of which four are administered through the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and were excluded from the study) each of which is governed by an elected group of individuals known as a school board and to each of which is appointed a varying number of administrative officials. The size of these divisions varies across the province and for the purpose of this study were designated large, medium, or small. As trustees number no fewer than five in any division the designation was based on the number of teachers employed in the division:

large - 400 or more teachers: 4 boards
medium - 100 to 399 teachers: 10 boards
small - 1 to 99 teachers: 105 boards

From this stratification of school divisions a random sample of each was chosen. The writer wrote to two large boards, six medium boards and twenty-five small boards asking that

TABLE 1

Participation of Boards Chosen by Stratified Random Sample

Number of Boards	Boards Contacted	Sample Size	Percentage Participation
Large 4	2	2	100
Medium 10	6	5	83
Small 105	25	9	35

their chairmen and officials participate in the study by being interviewed. Table 1 shows the response rates.

Borg and Gall (1977:121) stated that stratified sampling is desirable when a researcher wants to be assured that "certain subgroups in the population will be represented in the sample in proportion to their numbers in the population itself." A stratified sample is apropos this study because very few Saskatchewan school divisions employ 400 or more teachers but very many employ 1 to 99 teachers and large divisions have comparatively much greater numbers of board members than medium or small divisions.

As Bargen (1970:7) noted "in essence, the board is represented by its chairman...." As such, the chairman could choose to be interviewed himself, designate another trustee, designate an official, or designate some combination of interviewees.

Board members and officials constituted only part of the interviewees for this study. The writer wanted to interview other persons because they might be very knowledgeable about events and activities leading to changes to Saskatchewan's school law. These individuals were identified using a sampling technique known alternately as nomination, cross-referencing, and snowballing. The use of this technique stemmed from Kerlinger's admonition (1974:479) that respondents must be knowledgeable about the researcher's area of concern or they are of no value to the study.

Fairchild (1944) said that cross-referencing can be used in

> connection with cataloguing or recording information. In the recording of one item attention is called to related items in connection with which pertinent information may be found.

Lazarsfeld et al (1972:260) described snowballing as

> one method of interviewing a man's immediate social environment [by using] the sociometric questions in the interview for sampling purposes. For example, in a study of political attitudes...this approach was used: first interviewing a small sample of persons, then asking these persons who their best friends are, interviewing these friends, and asking them, their friends, interviewing these, and so on....

In this study "friends" were not important, but the Lazarsfeld concept is applicable when asking trustees or officials to identify persons whom they consider knowledgeable regarding educational legislation changes and then interviewing those persons named.

Lazarsfeld et al (1972:260) considered snowballing to be compatible with random sampling. Those writers stated that

> this sampling technique is like that of a good reporter who tracks down "leads" from one person to another. The difference, of course, is that snowballing sampling...is amenable to the same scientific sampling procedures as ordinary samples. Where the population in ordinary samples is a population of individuals, here it is two populations: one of individuals and one of relations among individuals.

Snowballing allowed the researcher in this study to flesh out the areas of concern in the study. It permitted access to individuals who, although not in an elected or official position with any school board, were connected to boards by

TABLE 2

Breakdown of Interviewees

	Trustees	Officials	Nominees		Nominees
			T.	O.	
Large Boards (2)	1	1	1	1	1
	1	1	0	0	1
Medium Boards (5)	1	2	0	0	0
	2	1	0	0	0
	0	2	0	0	0
	1	2	0	0	0
	2	1	0	0	0
Small Boards (9)	1	1	0	0	0
	0	1	0	0	0
	1	0	0	0	0
	1	0	0	0	0
	0	1	0	0	0
	0	1	0	0	0
	1	1	0	0	0
	1	0	0	0	0
	0	1	0	0	0

their knowledge of proposed changes to educational legislation. Such persons may have had the capacity either to influence the development of the proposed legislation on behalf of school boards or to observe what political activities boards undertook themselves in order to influence its development.

Table 2 shows the number of persons interviewed. As Table 2 shows, thirty-one people representing sixteen boards were interviewed. In fact, four persons were nominated by others but one was a trustee, the other an official.

Rationale for Sampling Technique

In considering Borg and Gall's definition of population the writer had to decide whether the population to be used in this study would be school board members, their officials, nominated persons, some combination of these groups, or school boards themselves. In excess of 800 trustees and 500 officials belong to 123 school divisions in Saskatchewan. A random sample of trustees or officials could not reasonably assure the writer that the activities of the corporate entities known as school boards would be determined. Prior to actually selecting a sample the writer had no means of determining the number of other knowledgeable other persons, who might have acted on behalf of school boards or be nominated by them.

Given the problems created by trying to consider the groups of people listed above as parts or all of the

population for this study the writer chose to use the corporate entities called school boards and to seek permission from those entities to interview board members and/or officials. Support for this rationale, despite the reified treatment accorded "boards of education", comes from several writers: Enns (1966), Hodgson (1976), Bargen (1977), and Bryce, et al (1979) who all refer to boards of education in a reified sense.

Sample Problems

Of the school boards contacted 100% of the large, 83% of the medium, and 36% of the small agreed to participate in this study. That only nine of twenty-five boards contacted and of 105 in the population agreed to participate raises questions about the representative nature of the sample. Only one small board that was asked to participate offered a reason for refusing: "We do not open our records in this division to outsiders" was the comment of the person contacted. While The School Act of the day made records of all board meetings public the writer decided not to aggravate the acerbic reaction of the trustee in question by pointing that out.

Reasons why other small board members may not have participated are speculative. First, only two or three interviews could be held per week which meant that several weeks passed before those who were interviewed could be. Many potential interviewees were farmers who sit on boards

and who could not because of seeding or harvest requirements afford time to participate. Second, during the summer several prospective interviewees may have been on holidays. Third, many prospective interviewees, upon reviewing the activities of their boards, may have felt they had nothing to contribute to the study.

Further studies that involve board members from small school divisions may do well to account for the seasonality of scheduling interviews.

Each board that was asked to participate was sent a confirmation slip with a date and time for interview but with alternatives requested. Interestingly, only one board that did not participate returned this slip in refusal. None of the other non-participating boards returned their slips.

The Interview

While data may be collected by any of several methods the one selected for this study was the interview. Good (1972:238) regarded the interview as a "process of communication or interaction" which, if the interviewer and the respondent "share a common language and terminology," permits collection of complete and frank answers from the respondent. Kerlinger (1974:479) called the interview a direct means of collecting data. Its main strength, according to Kerlinger, lies in the researcher's ability to gather a great deal of information from the respondent. A weakness of the directness stems from the reluctance of some

respondents to provide information when confronted with an interview.

Several types of interview procedures are available. The purpose of this research was best attained by combining two techniques: the semi-structured interview and the unstructured interview.

The semi-structured interview. Good (1972:245) described two types of semi-structured interviews. His Type B was used in this study. It is stimulus-structured and response-free. Each respondent was asked to respond to identical questions during the interview, except as noted below. Their responses were "free" in that no respondent had to give identical responses to any questions.

Good (1972:239) noted that an interview provides "primarily subjective data, that is, direct description of the world of experience" of the respondent. An interview, he said, "has a certain advantage for collection of data relation to...interest social perception." This subjectivity of social perception requires use of an unstructured data collection technique.

Unstructured interview. This technique was used in conjunction with the semi-structured interview. It allowed the interviewer to ask questions of a spontaneous nature as the need arose during the course of an interview. Answers to those spontaneous questions served to flesh out areas of concern to the researcher. The interviewer's judgment was

used to determine the validity of a question which arose during an interview. Of the unstructured interview Good (1972:145) said that "each question must be examined in relation to any antecedent in an earlier part of the interview (relationships, inconsistencies, transitions, and cross-references)."

Difficulties with the Interview

The reliability of information obtained through an interview is affected by such factors as:

1. the desire of interviewees to reveal personal impressions to the interviewer.

2. reluctance of interviewees to reveal personal information that they deem confidential.

3. personal biases of the interviewer that become obvious to the interviewee.

Overcoming These Difficulties

1. The semi-structured portion of the interview schedule was content validated in order to ensure that questions meant the same to all respondents. The validation was done first by having graduate students and university faculty members read each question and comment about the content. Second, the researcher asked selected school trustees and officials in Saskatchewan to comment about the content of each question. These people were eliminated from the data collection sample.

2. The interviewer attempted to establish a rapport with the respondents which precluded their having to make favourable impressions and which encouraged them to be forthright in their responses.

3. The confidentiality of all responses was guaranteed. Interviews were tape recorded with the advance knowledge of respondents. Names were not used on the tapes and no reference was made to the school division being used in the sample.

4. The stimulus-structured, response-free technique minimized interviewer bias. Maintaining the validity of the unstructured portions of the interview was more difficult.

Good (1972:235) suggested the following factors will help to create a valid unstructured interview:

1. A spontaneous question must be clear and unambiguous.

2. The question should extract information from the respondent.

3. The information should be in agreement with expectancy.

Examination of School Board Documents and Minutes

The researcher asked to be allowed to study documents and school board minutes germane to the present study. They were examined in order to obtain information about boards' political activities, or plans for them, which occurred

during the period January 1, 1976 to December 31, 1979. This period was chosen because it encompasses those dates set aside by the provincial government for interest group participation in voicing opinions about proposed changes to educational legislation. By December 31, 1979, the Act had been law for one year, consequently, examination of documents made in this period was done to obtain evidence of boards' reactions to it.

School Board Minutes

Education in Saskatchewan prior to January 1, 1979, was governed, in part, with The School Act. Section 134 of the Act read in part:

> 134. The secretary or secretary treasurer of the board shall:
>
> > 1. keep a full and correct record of the proceedings of every meeting of the board in the minute book provided for that purpose, and see that the minutes when confirmed are signed by the chairman....

If trustees had been discussing pending changes in educational legislation during board meetings, then the content of their discussions should appear recorded in the meetings' records. The content of their meetings was analyzed in order to ascertain what political activities the trustees planned with respect to the revision and consolidation of educational legislation.

Documentary analysis. As part of the overall methodology the researcher decided to examine school boards' minutes of those school boards that participated in this study. Under the repealed School Act, secretary treasurers were required to keep and maintain minutes of each board meeting held by their boards. The chairmen of school boards were required to sign the minutes and verify their authenticity. Interviewees were given a choice as to whether they wanted the researcher to review the minutes before or after the interview.

By examining the minutes of trustee and official respondents of school boards the researcher was able to identify corporate attitudes and interests in the revision and consolidation of educational legislation. Furthermore, if boards focused on any particular issues pertaining to the changes pending, then note was made of the issues. Finally, any decisions which trustees made regarding political activities designed to influence the ways in which revisions and consolidations were to proceed were noted by the researcher.

Historical research. Borg and Gall (1977:260) referred to historical research as the

> systematic and objective location, evaluation, and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions concerning past events.

Good (1972:165) called examination of a school board secretary's minutes a primary source of historical data.

> Primary sources are the original documents or remains, the first witness to the event, with only the mind of the observer or eyewitness coming between the original event and the user of the source.

While the present study was not an historical one per se the use of historical documents, the school board minutes, served to enhance the collection of data appropriate to it.

Collection of Information from School Board Minutes

The analysis of minutes was done in order to help substantiate the nature of the activities in which boards had engaged or in which they had directed their officials or other persons to engage in relation to the revision and consolidation of educational legislation. The analysis was done in a preconceived, systematic manner using the guidelines contained in Appendix 2. The guidelines served as a means to identify activities in the minutes which were relevant to the study and promoted systematic review of them.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3 contains a description of the methodology used in this study. The population is identified as school boards, of the Province of Saskatchewan. The sample size and rationale for the sampling technique are specified. Because data gathering depended on the technique of interview and content analysis these research techniques are described in detail.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter contains this study's findings. They are based upon responses to the questions contained in the Interview Schedule (Appendix 1).

During several interviews respondents' answers to some questions asked late in the interview were similar to those of questions asked early in the interview. The reasons were two fold. First, earlier questions tended to seek general information and later questions tended to seek specific information. Many respondents stated that they had not considered the specific implications for education of the White Paper or Bills that preceded The Education Act. Where interviewees could not, or would not, provide the sought after information specifically their responses were considered related to findings of a general nature. Second, trustees were often less able or willing to give specific responses to questions than were their officials.

Background Information

Interviewees. All interviewees were either members or officials of boards of education in the Province of

TABLE 3

Rated Familiarity with The Education Act

	Boards		
	Large	Medium	Small
Thorough			
Trustees	2	3	2
Officials	2	3	4
Nominees	2	-	-
Moderate			
Trustees	-	2	1
Officials	-	5	2
Vague			
Trustees	-	1	2
Officials	-	-	-

Saskatchewan and they had been at the date of passage of The Education Act, or they were knowledgeable persons identified by referencing. Two board chairmen contacted initially who were not on their respective boards at the Act's passage referred the writer to other board members who had been. Only one board chairman, from a small school division, refused outright to participate, or to allow his officials to participate in the study. His sole comment was that "we do not open our records in this school division to outsiders."

Thirty-one people were interviewed. They represented two large, five medium, and nine small school divisions chosen by stratified random sample from throughout Saskatchewan. No trustee had ever been a member of any other school board although six officials had been employed as officials by more than one board between January 1, 1976 and January 1, 1979.

Of the thirty-one interviewees one was a trustee and one was an official whose expertise and knowledge about revision and consolidation of educational legislation in Saskatchewan were identified through the cross-referencing technique. Two other nominees were representative of one large board but were neither trustees nor officials.

Familiarity with The Education Act. In rating their familiarity with the Act eighteen respondents said thorough; ten said moderate, three said vague. Interviews tended to confirm this range of ratings and, as Table 3 shows,

TABLE 4

Sources of Awareness

	Ministerial Letter	S.S.T.A	Other
Large	2	2	0
Medium	5	3	0
Small	9	2	0

officials generally appeared to be more familiar with the Act than trustees. The trustee who served on the government's committee to review educational legislation was extremely knowledgeable about repealed legislation and the new Act.

Pre-White Paper

On February 3, 1975, the then Minister of Education established the School Law Review Committee. According to the White Paper (1977:1) its appointed membership was asked to

1. study all existing statutes which [had] reference to and effect upon the K - XII educational system of Saskatchewan;

2. investigate and make recommendations to the Minister of Education regarding the consolidation and upgrading of existing statutes.

The School Law Reform Committee completed its mandate in January, 1976 and the White Paper on school law reform appeared in March, 1977.

Awareness of impending change to educational legislation. An examination of board minutes for the seventeen boards involved in this study revealed that each became aware of the provincial government's intention to revise and consolidate educational legislation in April, May or June of 1976. Table 4 shows that a ministerial letter advised all boards of this intention. Minutes of seven boards contained additional references to the impending changes that originated with the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association.

TABLE 5

Boards' General Pre-White Paper Reactions to

Government's Intention to Revise School Law

	Interest Noted in Minutes	Approve of Intent.	Need for Info.	Create Study Comm.	Query SSTA	Leave to SSTA
Large	2	2	2	2	2	0
Medium	5	5	4	1	1	2
Small	9	9	7	1	1	5

	Contact Min.	Media	Teachers	Contact Parents	Other Boards	None
Large	2	0	0	0	2	0
Medium	1	0	0	0	2	1
Small	0	0	0	0	1	2

Reaction to Government's Intentions. Review of board minutes and open-ended discussions with interviewees indicated that early reactions to the impending changes were consistently only ones of acknowledgement. As corporate bodies all boards acknowledged the government's intention and, as shown in Table 5, several considered appropriate a decision to "wait until it was more specific" before commenting or taking further action. In interviews trustees revealed that they thought the need for revision and consolidation was overdue. They noted the need to make the legislation less cumbersome and less awkward and more intelligible to laymen. Remarked one trustee

> I was pleased to hear that the government planned to make changes to The School Act. The legislation was too cumbersome before with more than a dozen acts. I just wished that when the government writes the laws they would write them in plain English.

When asked further about the board's reactions the same individual said

> it was about time the government changed the law and made it more understandable. We're not lawyers on our board and we didn't always know how to interpret things in [the old School Act].

Four boards were, as noted in Table 5, exceptional. Two large, one medium, and one small board worked throughout 1976 to

1. create committees to study any government proposals for educational legislation reform;

2. query the SSTA about its views on changes to educational legislation;

3. contact the minister of education about possible dates for release of a White Paper, pertaining to changes in educational legislation; and

4. hold joint discussions about changes with other boards.

Many small school boards indicated that they would let the SSTA handle all matters involving the government's plans to revise and consolidate the law. One chairman from a very small school division indicated that "revision and consolidation was left entirely to the SSTA. We were neither asked for nor offered any advice." Board minutes tended to confirm this course of action. Another trustee from a medium sized board commented that "we left all the decisions in the capable hands of the SSTA and our board did not take part." Chairmen of two small boards said that revision and consolidation of school law would not likely affect their school divisions. By the end of 1976 only six school boards had required their officials to monitor government or SSTA activities about proposed changes to educational legislation.

Before the White Paper became public none of the sixteen school boards involved with this study made public their comments about the government's intentions to revise and consolidate school law. No attempts were made by boards to discuss issues or concerns with the general public or teachers and none of the boards used the news media to publicize their concerns.

TABLE 6

Officials' and Nominees' General Pre-White Paper Reactions to Government's Intention to Revise School Law

	Approve of Intention			Contact Prof. Organs.	Contact Officials of Other Boards	Self* Study	Did Nothing
	Yes	No	No Comt.				
Large	2	0	0	2	2	0	0
Nominees	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medium	4	1	3	3	3	2	5
Small	4	0	2	2	2	1	4

*Officials from large boards studied proposals from their own interest but they were directed by their boards to conduct studies for the boards.

TABLE 7

Boards' Reactions and Activities Related to the White Paper

	Discussed at Board Meetings					
	Section by Section	At one or two Meetings	With Other Agenda Items	Not Discussed	Wanted Changes	Referred to in Minutes
Large	2	0	-	-	2	2
Medium	2	3	0	3	3	5
Small	1	5	7	2	2	7

TABLE 8

Numbers of Large Boards Communicating
Desired Changes in White Paper

How Contacted	Person or Organization Contacted				
	Minister	MLA	Dept. Official	SSTA	Nominee
Letter	2	2	2	2	1
Telephone	2	2	2	2	1
In Person	2	2	2	2	1
Through MLA	0	-	0	-	-

	Prof. Org.	Media	Parents	Teachers	Students
Letter	0	0	2	1	1
Telephone	0	0	-	-	-
In Person	0	-	-	-	-
Through MLA	-	-	-	-	-

Note: Dashes indicate non-applicable relationships

TABLE 9

Numbers of Medium Boards Communicating Desired Changes in White Paper

How Contacted	Person or Organization Contacted				
	Minister	MLA	Dept. Official	SSTA	Nominee
Letter	1	0	2	3	0
Telephone	0	0	2	3	0
In Person	0	0	1	3	0
Through MLA	0	-	0	-	-
	Prof. Org.	Media	Parents	Teachers	Students
Letter	0	0	1	0	0
Telephone	0	0	-	-	-
In Person	0	-	-	-	-
Through MLA	-	-	-	-	-

Note: Dashes indicate non-applicable relationships

TABLE 10

Number of Small Boards Communicating
Desired Changes in White Paper

Person or Organization Contacted

How Contacted	Minister	MLA	Dept. Official	SSTA	Nominee
Letter	1	0	1	2	0
Telephone	0	0	1	2	0
In Person	0	0	0	2	0
Through MLA	0	-	0	2	-

	Prof. Org.	Media	Parents	Teachers	Students
Letter	0	0	1	0	0
Telephone	0	0	0	0	0
In Person	0	0	0	0	-
Through MLA	-	-	-	-	-

Note: Dashes indicate non-applicable relationships

TABLE 11

Number of Boards Inviting Government Members and Officials to Board Meetings

	Minister	MLA	Department Official
Large	2	0	2
Medium	1	0	3
Small	0	0	2

Pre-White Paper reactions of school board officials also varied, as shown in Table 6. Because officials are employed by boards they take their direction from the corporate body and so must carry out board directives. Officials from three small boards expressed dismay at their board's apparent lack of interest in the government's plan to prepare a White Paper on consolidation and revision of school law. One official confided that he was dismayed by his board's decision to do little in the way of trying to influence the development of new legislation:

> ...not so much because of an obvious need for revision and consolidation but because of a need to represent local interest in education.... The grassroots deserves some representation and I felt that the board missed an opportunity to voice its opinions.

A second official said that he was annoyed by the board's decision to leave matters to the SSTA but he reasoned that in early 1976 "they may not have fully realized the seriousness of the government's intentions." Further,

> Board members are lay people whose interests in law are not all that great, but they could have directed me or [the other official] to prepare statements that reflected our interests in planned changes. They could have been sent to the SSTA and at least we'd have got in our two cents worth.

Three officials noted in Table 6 studied the issues without expressed board directive and two offered their findings to their boards. About fifty percent of the officials sampled did nothing. One official bluntly stated that he preferred the old legislation because he felt completely comfortable with it and its complexities.

Post-White Paper

The White Paper on Consolidation and Revision of School Law in the Province of Saskatchewan was released by the government in March, 1977. With only two exceptions April and May minutes of all boards involved in this study showed a reference to release of the White Paper. Interviews confirmed that all boards, including the exceptions, made at least minimal reference to the White Paper. Table 7 identifies boards' reactions to the White Paper and indicate whether changes were wanted in it. Only five of sixteen boards contacted reviewed the White Paper section by section, as was confirmed by both minute examination and interview. Only boards that had discussed the White Paper could express a desire for changes to it, hence the five boards which did not discuss it at all during board meetings severely limited their abilities to recommend changes.

Tables 8, 9, 10, and 11 indicate that large boards made no greater use of government members and officials in expressing their desires for change than did either medium or small boards.

Boards were by and large unlikely to discuss their concerns with either teachers or students and only four boards attempted to discuss White Paper concerns with parents. The trustees of the large and medium boards remarked that attendance at their boards' meetings was low. At one small board's meeting no parents attended at all. One

respondent said "there is an apparent loss of public confidence in schools" which "may or may not be reflected in low turnouts to these meetings." An official of one large board denied this lack of confidence but said

> perhaps there is some confusion about how schools operate and about the program that is offered and efforts perhaps are required to provide greater public understanding.

Five trustees conceded that ratepayers' concern for educational affairs is generally not highly visible.

No boards made any special effort to contact the news media or to convey their criticism to the public. Trustees from large and medium boards whose locations have daily newspapers were asked about this non-contact. One trustee from a medium board complained that he did not want "adverse publicity to affect his board." A trustee from a large board felt that efforts to publicize were ineffective and his board was always reluctant to make them. He added that the public was always welcome at board meetings and mentioned that "a few of the same people consistently attend them; but that attendance was generally limited." The SSTA did contact the news media and report its concerns in its official publication. One board addressed its concerns about various sections of the White Paper to teachers and pupils and invited comments from those groups. Response was poor with the board deciding not to act on any of the comments, the chairman indicating that in his board's opinion comments "either did not reflect board policy or were unworthy of

consideration."

Discussion of White Paper at board meetings. Eighty-eight percent of boards' minutes contained evidence of discussion on the White Paper. Section by section discussion was done by two large, two medium, and one small boards at two or more meetings. Four small boards used meeting time to appoint their officials to study the White Paper or to appoint trustees to attend SSTA study sessions about it. These appointments were in compliance with an SSTA memorandum asking boards to send trustees to regional study sessions. Of interest is the finding that not all boards' minutes referred to this memorandum or to the regional meetings and one is left to speculate whether representatives from every board attended regional meetings. The boards which did section by section reviews of the White Paper all had either their officials or a committee of officials and trustees prepare briefs prior to the reviews. All such committees were formed by resolutions the wording of which was similar in each case and duly recorded in the boards' minutes. Of the persons interviewed four admitted their boards gave the White Paper only a cursory review. For example, the minutes of a small board contain the following excerpt:

> Secretary informed board of SSTA memo asking if board wished to make a submission regarding White Paper. SSTA apparently already submitted brief to Minister. Board decided it did not have time to make submission.

The minutes of another board contain the following excerpt: "Board members given SSTA memo regarding branch meeting on

[date] to discuss White Paper." Whether any follow-up activity occurred could not be determined from these minutes.

A trustee from a small board and an official from a large one made similar comments about their boards' resources with which to review the White Paper. The trustee said that his board "was limited in the time and money it could spend on reviewing the White Paper." Accordingly, the board had

> to rely on the SSTA to speak on our behalf. We have a superintendent and a secretary-treasurer who are responsible for all the daily chores of running our school division and they wouldn't have had the time to do much else.

The official, who had been on a specially appointed committee which his board directed to study the White Paper, said

> ...smaller boards are going to have difficulty in complying with some of the requirements of the Act. For example, ...in planning three-year budget documents, or planning for French immersion. The smaller boards do not have the manpower with which to produce these detailed plans. I suspect that those boards could not afford the luxury of having their only two officials complete an in-depth analysis of the proposed legislation and then write a report which contains [sic] a bunch of recommended changes to the legislation.

"After all," he said, "we had a committee to do that, and we spent several weeks preparing our report for the board."

Changes in Proposed Legislation Desired by Boards

White Paper's relation to The Education Act. The White Paper was a formal preview of the provincial government's proposal for revision and consolidation of educational legislation. As such, it could have passed through the Legislature intact and become The Education Act.

The government intended that the new Act would reflect various objectives that it had for governance of education and the White Paper was drafted in the spirit of those objectives. An advisor to the minister of education responsible for initiation of the revision and consolidation process provided the writer with the objectives as they pertained to the governance of education. Among them were:

1. to enable people affected by the education system to understand their roles in it;

2. to give updated statements of the functions of school boards;

3. to state in law a frame of reference for the role of central authority in education and to legislate to functions of school boards;

4. to create greater public awareness of boards of educations by legislating three-year election requirements for board members;

5. to require boards to develop a policy for citizen advisory committees although creation of the committees would not be compulsory;

6. to establish a balance between pupils' rights and responsibilities; and

7. to simplify the law so that laymen could understand it.

Trustees and officials raised no objections to these objectives but criticism and concomitant presentiments were

TABLE 12

Sections of the White Paper of Concern to Trustees, Officials and Nominees and Combined Frequency of Response

	Section 143				Section 190(b)				Section 48				Section 24			
	T	O	N	F	T	O	N	F	T	O	N	F	T	O	N	F
Large	2	2	2	100%	2	2	2	100%	2	2	2	100%	2	2	2	100%
Medium	6	8	-	100%	6	8	-	100%	6	8	-	100%	4	6	-	70%
Small	5	6	-	100%	5	6	-	100%	5	6	-	100%	3	3	-	54%
				100%				100%				100%				74%

	Section 218				Section 218				Section 156				Section 161			
	T	O	N	F	T	O	N	F	T	O	N	F	T	O	N	F
Large	2	2	2	100%	2	2	2	100%	2	2	2	100%	2	2	2	100%
Medium	3	3	-	43%	4	3	-	50%	3	3	-	43%	2	2	-	14%
Small	2	3	-	43%	2	1	-	18%	1	1	-	16%	0	0	-	-%
				57%				51%				44%				22%

directed at specific sections of the White Paper the wording of which they believed produced law which transgressed the spirit of the legislation that the government intended to produce.

Changes sought by boards. Board members, officials, and nominees were asked to identify sections of the White Paper that they wanted changed. Board minutes were examined in order to reveal what changes may have been discussed at board meetings. Because not all interviewees were able to identify section numbers their remarks had to be interpreted and assigned the proper number. Of interest is the finding that regardless of trustees' or officials' familiarity with the White Paper or The Education Act concerns were often directed to the same sections of the White Paper. Even boards which admitted to having given the White Paper little attention would address these sections. Table 12 shows those sections for which dissatisfaction was most often cited. While other sections were cited they were not listed. The point to be made by Table 12 is that sufficient concern appeared to exist with the White Paper to put some onus on boards to respond to it.

School boards wanted changes made to the White Paper so that the sections would be consistent with the government's stated objectives for educational legislation.

Section 190 read, in part, that the principal shall, subject to board policy and departmental regulations, be

responsible for the general organization, administration, and supervision of the school and he has the duty and power to

> (a) assign, in consultation with one member of his staff, the duties of each member of the teaching staff...

Boards considered that this section of the legislation would be dictating a required style of administration for principals, particularly if all staff assignments required member consultation. The question most frequently asked was what happens when the principal and staff come to conflict over assignments and what administrative authority does the principal have to resolve conflict? Furthermore, if the principal were assigned this power then boards perceived it to limit their roles in education. One chairman stated that "we're at a loss to decide who the principal works for, us or the government." A second was more blunt:

> Section 190(b) of the White Paper seemed to allow the government to prescribe a style of administration, one to which the principal would have to adhere if he is going to follow the letter of the law. He, by this section, must consult. We're concerned about what "consultation" means and what will happen when a principal is forced to... settle a dispute over assignments or even make short term arrangements to cover illness.... We did not like this section's part (d) either. It requires the principal to supervise the care and maintenance of the building and facilities...they (principals) are not engineers.

Two chairmen remarked that this section appeared to dictate a style of management and one asked "and who knows if one style suits all situations? Maybe consultation isn't always the answer." The second thought that the legislative committee was shortsighted in "requiring this consultative style of management."

Section 143 of the White Paper designated the director of education for each school division as its chief executive officer. Most school boards traditionally recognized their secretary-treasurer as chief executive officers and they appeared to have functioned as such. As one trustee noted:

> Under former legislation our superintendent was hired by the provincial government and sent to work in our Unit. The board hired the secretary-treasurer. Some of us liked this arrangement because we always knew that the secretary-treasurer was "our" man and the superintendent was "their" man.... Even teachers understood this arrangement and most were even hired by the secretary-treasurer not the superintendent. We've always thought of the secretary-treasurer as the chief executive officer, the tradition could take a long time to change.

Not all trustees had this concern. One bluntly stated that he considered "himself to be the chief executive officer of my school unit." One secretary-treasurer who has been with his board over four decades claimed that he "...could quite safely ignore the appointment of the director as chief executive officer" because, in his exact words, "I run things anyway!" Many trustees merely suggested that the responsibilities of operating a school division were so onerous that a director, trained as a teacher, might not have sufficient ability to be chiefly responsible for curriculum and instruction and concurrently to be chiefly responsible for finance, operations and maintenance and property.

Interviewees suggested that sections 190 and 143 contravened the intent of the government's objective to clarify roles in education.

Section 218 of the White Paper stated that

> the applicable provisions of this Act and of the regulations of the department shall be deemed to be terms of employment under a contract of employment between a teacher and a board....

Boards complained that this section allows government to impose conditions of employment for teachers; therefore, boards cannot properly hire them or regulate their activities. The government's second objective was to update boards' functions and its third was to make a framework for central and local authority in education. Section 218 was seen to obfuscate the functions of the boards, give too much authority to the province in matters pertaining to staff, and move teachers too close to the employ of the province. One pertinent point, raised by two trustees, summarized here by the comments of one was

> we hadn't seen the regulations yet so we couldn't know what effects they would have on teachers' contracts. We know now, of course, that the regulations don't clearly specify that teachers need not supervise at noon-hours.

Trustees also thought that section 24 of the White Paper clouded the issue of authority. That section read

> The minister may:
>
> 1. appoint one or more persons to inquire into...any complaint or dispute arising from the decision of a board ...or school official...;
>
> 13. prescribe the subjects of instruction and issue courses of study...;
>
> 14. authorize a course developed by a school and approved by the board...;

Board members were not averse to following regulations but believed that under section 24 lines of authority were

unclear as they pertain to matters of instruction. Board members were wary of the minister's statutory right to intervene in any decision made by the board even though the right to do so might only be exercised sparingly. Comments made by one trustee were:

> ...the White Paper seemed to give a great deal of power to the minister of education that properly belongs to trustees. They are looking after the needs of parents and children and are in a better position to do so than the minister.

Another statement was:

> ...and besides he's got the power to review any decision we make. It's pretty scary. Not only can this person [the appointee under section 24(1)] look into complaints about board members but principals and superintendents too.

The minutes of one board were quite blunt. An excerpt reads: "...so the minister has a lot of power he did not have before..." and "the guy who wrote the legislation didn't do it for the people, he did it for the government."

One official from a small board said that he felt as if the

> government was being somewhat subversive in including [section 24] in the White Paper. A little more erosion of local autonomy couched in a "may" clause that gives him (the minister) a lot of clout. Before we never had much hassle to teach courses suited to local needs but with this section of the White Paper it almost seemed as if the government were saying it wouldn't recognize local needs anymore. Everyone was to get the same, except we know that the small divisions never get what the big ones do.

Section 48 of the White Paper generated much heated comment from trustees. It required that school board elections be held every three years at which times all board

positions would be vacant. Then-current legislation required elections every two years with one-half a board's positions vacant. Trustees complained that elections held under the new conditions could result in replacement of the entire board of education every three years, a situation which they believed would weaken its ability to govern properly. One trustee explained that in his board's opinion section 48

> ...weakens a board's ability to govern because trustees terms of office would no longer be staggered. It's possible the whole board could be voted out...and the new board wouldn't know what's going on.

A second trustee thought that this section

> was not properly considered before it was included. There is a distinct possibility that an entire board could be replaced at one time. Our officials could have a difficult time coping with a board composed of entirely new members.... Yes, we'd survive but I fear the quality of education in a division where this happened would suffer.

Still a third trustee implied that the section was included so as "to undermine trustees' authority." He believed that the White Paper demonstrated the government's intention to restrict local autonomy and that section 48 would in the long run "make us look bad and give government reasons (sic) to take away even more from us." Further, trustees were not convinced that elections every three years would stimulate or strengthen the public's awareness of a board's functions or roles in education. An official remarked that he might find "breaking in a whole new board difficult" because he would have to teach trustees about their responsibilities as well as operate the school division.

Trustees did concede that the electorate might be weary of elections held every two years as is evidenced, in their opinion, by poor voter turnout. They would not concede that if fewer elections were held then voter weariness might dissipate and response to elections improve. A board official remarked that voters weren't really "tired of so many elections" rather

> the general public in rural Saskatchewan is often disinterested and lacks basic knowledge about educational goals, objectives, and policy.

A board member concluded that

> voter turnout is usually pretty low. When the public does become involved it is because of local or personal problems.

There appeared to be no trade-off in their minds between perceived loss of continuity in governance and even a remote likelihood of improved voter response to education through fewer elections.

Section 128 required certain boards to "make provision in its by-laws for organization of local school advisory committees." In the government's view these committees would create "grassroots" control of educational matters. Not one trustee whose board was affected by section 128 foresaw merit in the government's view. One chairman commented that

> if we were to convene school advisory committee meetings it is my opinion that the only people who'd show up are the ones with axes to grind. We'd get minorities or people who have petty problems and the board would end up having to spend time on minor details and we'd never get to the matter of local needs.

A second chairman remarked that "the people elected us now

they (i.e., the government) should let us do our job." Boards were required only to develop a policy for organization of the committee; its actual establishment was not compulsory. Boards were neither required to convene those that were established nor to accept the advice of those convened. Two trustees commented that parents would probably not care to serve on such committees; consequently, their boards had no intention to set them up in their divisions. The minutes of one medium sized board revealed the following statement:

> the person who drafted section 128 does not understand the nature of local educational matters. We do a good job in this Unit of representing parents' demands and children's needs. These committees will only hinder us and parents who think they have something to contribute really don't have and will just get in our way.

Trustees generally did not think that section 128 would advance the government's fourth objective.

All persons interviewed agreed that the government's attempts to address pupils' rights and responsibilities were well-founded. A great deal of criticism was directed at specific sections of the White Paper which trustees believed were contrary to the government's intentions. Trustees cited as example section 156 of the White Paper which read, in part

> 156. ...no teacher, member of a board...director... or other school official shall in any way deprive, or attempt to deprive a pupil of access to, or advantage of the educational services approved and provided by...the board in a school in its jurisdiction....

Trustees and officials wondered at the words "attempt to deprive" and believed they threw into confusion the right of

a pupil to education services. What, they asked, would happen to the teacher who removed a rowdy pupil from class or to a principal who suspended the rowdy pupil. Each agreed that neither would likely suffer any ill-consequences but all still were uneasy with words that defied definition or which, if an issue arose involving removal from class or suspension, may acquire definition through court action. One trustee said

> as you know, a couple of school divisions are already in court because of the wording contained in the regulations (to The Education Act).... The White Paper should have been modified so that loose wording found in some sections could have been fixed. Going to court is very costly, even if you win, and I think the government should have made its definitions more precise.

A second trustee, commenting on the vagueness, asked "if this section didn't emphasize the pupils' rights too much" and "ignore their responsibilities." An official said that he thought

> that suspension might become more difficult to carry out. Pupils seem to have a much stronger right to educational services and the White Paper left vague any direction for principals or directors on how to handle a pupil's suspension without depriving him of an education or without infringing on his rights.

Trustees were concerned with section 161 of the White Paper which required a board to give parents "immediate access to its policy for mediating disputes" whenever a dispute arises between the school and a pupil. Trustees would have preferred the wording "reasonable access" because the courts have at least pondered the meaning of "reasonable" but have not provided an interpretation of "immediate."

Trustees and officials considered as vague the requirement that a pupil

> conform to the rules of the school approved by the board and submit to such discipline as would be exercised by a kind, firm and judicious parent.

The uncertainty of definitions for kind, firm and judicious bothered trustees and officials.

Trustees pointed out that sections 156 and 161 were examples of legislation not made more understandable or simple in the revision and consolidation of school law.

Two large boards, one medium, and one small board sent their recommendations for changes in the White Paper to the Minister of Education. These boards also sent their recommendations to the SSTA. No evidence could be found to suggest that any of the other twelve boards made these representations. Two large boards and one medium board made specific requests that an SSTA representative visit their offices to discuss the recommendations. A small board required its director to discuss the White Paper at the League of Educational Administrators and Directors (LEADS) and to refer LEADS' comments back to the board. One large board requested the SSTA to draft its own version of a White Paper and deliver it to the Minister of Education.

All trustees said that they were given sufficient time by government to study the White Paper. In general, they perceived their and SSTA's attempts to influence the government as less than fruitful; however, most trustees said

that they were not always aware of actions taken by boards other than their own in attempts to influence the government. The chairman of a smaller board thought that "the SSTA did as well as could be expected" but that "the Act is pretty much the same as the White Paper." An official of a large board said that he could "understand why smaller boards would not have had much influence...they just didn't have the manpower to study the White Paper sufficiently." Consequently, the smaller boards would tend to "let the SSTA carry the load." The chairman of another small board stated that "it doesn't matter that we weren't influential, I don't expect that the Act will affect us much anyway."

Post Act

The Education Act derived from revision and consolidation of fifteen separate Saskatchewan acts that governed the province's educational system. It was proclaimed, and the fifteen acts repealed, January 1, 1979.

Prior to its proclamation the regulations pertaining to it had never been made available to school boards for review. The new act and its regulations reached boards simultaneously and both caused concern for them. According to a Department of Education official the new Act consisted of seventy-five percent of legislation transposed verbatim from repealed acts and twenty-five percent of legislation developed specifically for it. A comparison of the White Paper and the Act showed that few substantive changes were

TABLE 13

Sections of The Education Act of Concern to Trustees, Officials and Nominees and Combined Frequency of Response

	Section 38				Section 107				Section 108				Section 206			
	T	O	N	F	T	O	N	F	T	O	N	F	T	O	N	F
Large	2	2	2	100%	2	2	2	100%	2	2	2	100%	2	1	1	67%
Medium	6	8	-	100%	6	8	-	100%	3	1	-	30%	4	4	-	60%
Small	5	6	-	100%	5	6	-	100%	0	0	-	0%	2	1	-	26%
				100%				100%				32%				48%

	Section 214				Section 350				Section 273				Section 275			
	T	O	N	F	T	O	N	F	T	O	N	F	T	O	N	F
Large	1	0	1	33%	2	2	2	100%	2	2	2	100%	2	2	2	100%
Medium	2	2	-	30%	2	0	-	14%	4	2	-	42%	4	2	-	42%
Small	3	1	-	36%	1	0	-	9%	2	3	-	46%	2	3	-	46%
				31%				30%				56%				56%

	Section 149				Section 155			
	T	O	N	F	T	O	N	F
Large	2	2	2	100%	2	2	2	100%
Medium	0	0	0	0%	1	0	-	7%
Small	0	0	0	0%	0	0	-	0%
				16%				18%

made to the White Paper, but more important, not one interviewee attributed special significance to any made. Consequently, trustees' complaints about The Education Act were frequently identical to those about the White Paper; however, during interviews and in examinations of minutes some novel comments were noted.

Generally, respondents appeared to be more familiar with certain sections of The Education Act than with others. Most respondents referred to them by general content descriptors rather than by section number. Without exception respondents cited sections of the Act which they thought created difficulties and problems for boards to control, administer, and manage education. Not until prompted by the interviewer (see question 21, Interview Schedule) did any respondent mention a section of the Act that was thought to facilitate these functions for boards of education. Table 13 gives the sections of the Act for which consistent concern was noted. Other sections gave rise to complaints and they are listed in Appendix 3.

Dissatisfaction with The Education Act

Two sections of The Education Act for which all interviewees expressed concern with section 107 and section 38. The former designates the director of education as the chief executive officer of the school division. Secretary-treasurers, other administrators, as well as trustees argued that such a designation contravenes a long-standing tradition

to consider the secretary-treasurer as the board's chief executive officer. A board official summarized as follows:

> ...although the superintendent had general supervisory powers and could make recommendations to the board, in reality there was a real dichotomy in control. In rural Saskatchewan the superintendent was regarded as the professional leader of the staff. He was responsible for teachers, instruction, and supervision. More often than not, the secretary-treasurer was responsible for the operation of the school unit. He was the chief executive officer and his power crossed into the realm of the superintendent. One example of this is in the area of teacher hiring. Many teachers remember that the person who gave them their first job was the secretary-treasurer and not the superintendent.

In the late 1960's in Saskatchewan The School Act was amended to read, in part

> 124(1) A unit board may, with the approval of the minister, appoint a superintendent of schools for the unit and...assign him his duties.

Note that the Act did not designate the appointee as chief executive officer. Further, if the Unit did not make the appointment the minister would appoint a government-hired superintendent. The important point to notice is that the dichotomy of powers between the superintendent and the secretary-treasurer remained intact. The Education Act muddied the power structure. As one trustee remarked "our secretary-treasurer was upset by the Act because it changed his status." Another said that his board's secretary-treasurer was very annoyed at the changes to the legislation not only because of the changes to his status but also because of the changes to the "familiarity with the old law." Interviewees were convinced that directors would have

difficulty coping with the responsibilities of finance and property management in addition to the instructional, curricular, and staffing ones. Comments were as follows: "we look to our director for educational leadership." "The director will be busy enough with the teachers. Other personnel should continue to report to the secretary-treasurer." "When we hired our director he was to oversee curriculum and instruction, not buildings." The chief executive officer designation might become cause for concern. An official confided that

> The Education Act states that the director is to be the chief executive officer. It is only natural for him to pursue the power the Act has given him. This change in role potentially puts him in conflict with not only the secretary-treasurer but also the boards and teachers for they do not see him in this position because of their past experiences.... Some boards believe that because they hire and define the role of director...the director must acquiesce to their desires.

The official implied that because of the wording of the Act the director may not have to acquiesce and that trustees will surrender some of their authority to a professional employee.

Trustees' anxiety was exacerbated by section 108 of the Act which stipulates that the director's powers and duties shall be prescribed by the board of education but that the director shall prepare reports as required by the Minister of Education and submit them to him. Trustees cited possible conflict of interest to stem from these requirements and six of them wondered "for whom does the director really work - the board or the department of education?"

Section 38 of the Act stipulates that board of education elections shall be held every three years and all positions shall be open to election. Trustees were concerned that defeat of an entire board would disrupt a board of education's continuity. Interviewees saw no connexion between three-year terms of office and revitalization of public interest in local educational affairs.

Trustees of two large, three medium, and two small boards considered the Act's regulation of teacher dismissal to be unrealistic and unfair. By section 206 all teachers under contract to a board of education who are to be dismissed, including non-tenure teachers, must be given reasons in writing for dismissal. By section 214 a teacher who wishes the dismissal to be investigated may apply to the minister of education to have established a board of reference to conduct an investigation. The minister, upon receipt of the application, must convene a board of reference. Trustees objected to this manner of investigation because it leaves no option, or requirement, for the teacher to appeal first to the board of education. A board of reference's findings are binding on the teacher and the board of education.

Trustees viewed the need to give non-tenured teachers reasons for dismissal as inappropriate interference with local control over the quality of education, but the concensus was not unanimous. Sixty percent of trustees

favoured retention of the repealed legislation which permitted dismissal of non-tenured teachers without reasons. They argued that the new Act makes difficult the removal from their schools of neophyte teachers who are destined to be unsatisfactory. Forty percent of trustees believed that all teachers deserved to know why they were being dismissed. Two trustees stated, without elaboration, that any unsatisfactory teachers could be removed successfully from their positions, and still retain their dignity. Interestingly, only these two trustees had been involved in the removal of teachers from schools for reasons of incompetence. None in the sixty percent majority had ever been involved with dismissal of teachers for this reason.

In commenting about these sections one trustee said that "all teachers, tenured or non-tenured, deserve to know the reasons for their dismissal" but, he added, "if they have a grievance teachers should have to confront the board before taking it to the minister." A second trustee thought that these sections were unclear. In the first place, the minister "probably doesn't have to convene a board of reference at every request." Still, he believed that "boards should not have to surrender the traditional control they've had over teachers." Another added that "boards have got to have control over new teachers because they have to have some assessment of their abilities." Yet another added that

> boards would like to retain the old legislation because it gives them control over newly employed

> teachers.... But anyone to be dismissed from any job deserves to know the reasons for dismissal because telling them is humanistic.

An official said that he favoured retention of the old legislation because it gave

> boards a means of removing people from the classroom who should not be teaching. We are under pressure to use "due process" through formative evaluation. I personally agree with this, but I have to be able to tell someone who's unfit that he should not be teaching. My board is afraid that the minister can interfere into situations which he won't understand. If a disgruntled teacher, tenured or not, goes to the minister first I don't even have a chance to present my conclusions to him (the teacher) first and discuss them. Of course, if the teacher goes to the minister first and I have to appear before a board of reference I would then not be able to discuss the matter with him at all...it's all a big waste of time.

One trustee said he could resolve the matter by abolishing "tenure for all teachers regardless of service." According to him no teachers should have tenure.

Trustees and officials objected to one part of section 350 of The Education Act. It requires a board of education to obtain ministerial approval prior to disposing of land or buildings "erected or otherwise acquired" to be used for instruction or accommodation of pupils. While the objection was not unanimous many interviewees noted that land or buildings had often been acquired by school divisions without provincial assistance. They questioned the minister's right to withhold authorization to dispose of real property purchased solely with local funds and perceived this right to be unreasonable. The remark made by one trustee of a large board summarizes the sentiments of the others. He said "we

purchased land and buildings solely with locally-raised funds. It isn't fair that the board must now obtain authority from the minister if it chooses to dispose of these assets." The eight trustees who were unconcerned about this section of the Act were actually unaware of its existence.

In the Act a principal is defined as "a teacher appointed by the board of education to perform the duties of a principal under this Act." Accordingly, all principals must belong to the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF). Sixty percent of trustees interviewed believed that principals should be excluded by legislation from STF membership. One medium board referred in its minutes to the need for this exclusion. These trustees reasoned that, as the new Act specifically identifies principals to be managers of schools who function in accordance with stated policies of the board of education, they must be precluded from such membership lest they carry out their managerial functions favouring their colleagues.

The trustees of eleven boards of education in whose school divisions guidance counsellors were employed expressed dismay that The Education Act did not provide for confidentiality of information exchanged between students and guidance counsellors. Four boards noted their concern in their minutes.

Three trustees remarked on the Act's silence with regard to teachers having access to their own personnel

files. Each felt that some guideline was necessary so that reasonable access could be ascertained and guaranteed.

Individuals had singular grievances and dissatisfactions with The Education Act which no one else interviewed mentioned. For interest, several are noted next. The possibility of other trustees or officials sharing the concerns does exist.

Sections 273 and 275 deal with the annual estimates and read, in part:

> 273(1) As early as possible in each year, but not later than the day specified annually by the minister...
>
> 276 As early as possible in each year, but not later than the first day of April...

The trustee interviewed wanted section 273 to read the same date as section 276. "The specificity would simplify our administrative procedures" he said.

Section 149 reads, in part:

> 149 ...it shall be the duty of every pupil
> (b) to provide himself with such supplies and materials not otherwise furnished by the board of education as may be considered necessary to his course of study by the principal...

One official considered this section vague and subject to interpretation that a board could "charge fees to pupils in order that their education be maintained at an acceptable standard."

Section 155(1) deals with attendance of pupils and reads, in part:

> 155(1) ...every parent, guardian or other person having charge of a pupil who is of compulsory age shall

> make all the provisions necessary for the regular attendance of that pupil...

"What does 'make all the provisions necessary' mean" querried one official. This section is vague and does not indicate to parents just what their responsibilities are. Furthermore, who will inform the parents about the need to make all necessary provisions?

Section 188(1) reads, in part:

> 188(1) ...a board of education...may provide for medical and dental examinations and treatment of pupils and of children under the age of seven years in the division...

A trustee was concerned that boards could be asked to "extend services beyond the field of education."

Examination of the minutes of two large boards, one medium, and one small board has revealed specific items that were articulated to the minister or government officials. One excerpt reads:

> Board member: motioned to write the minister of education to make every school year 200 days.
>
> Another member: the setting of the school year is possibly becoming a political or negotiable item. I would support the motion and ask the minister to state "shall" instead of "may" [set the year to 200 days].

This motion was carried and a letter containing the concern sent to the minister. A second excerpt reads:

> [board member] moves to have advisory committees established and functional in every school by 1981-82 school year.

The motion was passed and the minister informed of the boards' interest. A third excerpt reads:

TABLE 14

The Education Act's Effect on Boards' Ability to Govern Educational Matters

	Reduced Ability			No Effect			Did Not Know		
	T	O	N	T	O	N	T	O	N
Large	0	1	0	2	1	2	0	0	0
Medium	2	1	0	3	4	0	1	3	0
Small	3	2	0	2	3	0	0	1	0

> the board moves to inform the minister of education that it wishes to have five board members appointed to the trustee/government bargaining committee so that parity in negotiation can be established.

The motion was passed and the trustees' interest sent to the minister. In none of the aforementioned instances did trustee's interests produce any changes to The Education Act. The minutes of another board showed that its chairman "had telephoned [the minister] on several occasions in order to discuss the bargaining committee but he has never returned the calls." This chairman concluded that "the minister is avoiding the issue." And he eventually quit telephoning. Again, this interest generated no changes to the Act.

Governance of Education

The question of governance of education was put to school trustees and officials by asking them to bear in mind that it is frequently described as a polarization of either central control or local control with the actual point of control lying somewhere between the poles. Respondents were asked to describe whether The Education Act altered their board's ability to govern local educational affairs. As shown in Table 14 seventeen respondents said that the Act did not alter in any way the balance of centralized/decentralized control of education. The trustee from a small board said that he felt

> that the government has always had substantial control of education. The Act does not really do much to give it any more control because we can't lose what we don't have...

Another small board member thought that his board would not feel any changes in local/centralized control because "the government has so great a control over finances that they call the shots anyway." The chairman for a large board noted that

> the government is not too powerful, as some people would contend. Certainly it will look after its interests and because government has a large financial commitment to education we can expect it to demand greater accountability. But this demand is not an overabundance of power. Our board must learn to operate within the framework of the Act and any progressive board will learn to do so. We have a greater responsibility now to government to account for our actions but I don't believe that the changes in educational legislation made us any less able to control education at the local level or the government any more powerful.

The chairman from a medium-sized board echoed this remark:

> ...our board is a progressive one. We must follow the rules but a great deal of leeway exists for us to make decisions at the local level which quite properly belong at this level...and if we are innovative we will continue to be progressive.

This respondent said later that the provincial government was no more powerful under the new Act than it had been under old legislation. The chairman of another medium-sized board said only that "this continuum of control appears not to have been altered." The chairman of a very small school division remarked that "even if the Act has changed the continuum our board is not likely to be affected by it."

Trustees of two large boards and one medium board remarked that a progressive board uses whatever power is conferred to it by an education act to do the best it can to develop a system of high quality education in its division.

The Act was referred to by two as a series of guidelines for the exercise of power, one said power and common sense, some sections of which are more restrictive than others about certain activities but none of which restricts their boards' progressiveness.

Not all trustees shared this sentiment, even some who did not believe The Education Act altered boards' ability to govern education. For example, six trustees were angered at the Act's failure to specify teachers as the persons in school divisions to be responsible for noon hour supervision at schools. But even these six admitted that, on balance, their boards' ability to govern education was not altered by the Act. One trustee said that

> school program development in Saskatchewan has been and will continue to be a shared responsibility. A core program developed centrally should form the common element of programs from school to school throughout the province. However, all centrally developed programs require adaptation to suit local needs, desires, and circumstances. As well, there continues to be a need, perhaps duty, to develop additional programs locally.

This trustee then admonished that "a provincial core program, to be a core, must be acceptable to all communities." The trustee concluded by saying that

> trustees' legislated powers may be diminished but their responsibilities have never been greater, especially in areas of program development.

The trustee then conceded that "trustees have lost power through centralization and negotiation and as a result are vulnerable to public and government opinion." Yet, as another trustee remarked, trustees

> can diminish that vulnerability by speaking out. Too often the role of the trustee is to answer. Too often we react and in my mind that puts us in a very negative and very weak position. Why don't we initiate and let government and other groups respond to us?

The trustee pursued the remark to conclude "not just the SSTA alone but by all boards, repeatedly, with persistent publicity of their plans and activities."

The SSTA executive (1980:2) remarked in an editorial that because the government has five members and the trustees have four members on the provincial bargaining committee that determines, among other things, teachers' salaries and work conditions trustees of boards of education are powerless to influence bargaining events. Boards do continue to "pick up the tab" for costs negotiated by government. Eighteen interviewees supported the SSTA's contention that the 5/4 split on the bargaining committee significantly reduced a board's ability to control local educational matters. Interestingly, not one interviewee mentioned that teachers have four representatives on the committee.

Four trustees, one from a large board, one from a medium board, and two from a small board said that if control of education is related only to its financial affairs then the central government surely does have a significant edge in the balance of control. As one interviewee remarked

> the argument that control of education should be at the grassroots level doesn't hold. The grassroots doesn't have financial control now, especially since the board pays less than 16% of all costs of education.

Another commented that

> the notion of grassroots control isn't really related to finances anyway. Most parents don't take an active role in our school system anyway and except to pay taxes to support it they aren't involved.

He added that the grant structure of the province was almost impossible for laymen to understand and concluded that most ratepayers, supposedly at the grassroots, probably do not understand the tax structure at all.

A trustee whose division received no money from the province felt that, because the board has to pay for teachers' salaries over which the board believes it exercises little control, the division should receive provincial support for this large slice of operating expenses. Interviewees from boards which receive comparatively little in grant monies from the province commented about teachers' salaries. Some noted only that the teachers are well-paid for the work they do. One elaborated:

> The single greatest expense our board has is teachers' pay. We receive less than 20% of our financing from the province, the rest we raise through property tax. Yet, we bargain with the provincial government for the terms of teachers' contracts. The Act gives the government five negotiators and trustees four. We can't bargain properly for the biggest expense we have.

Another, from a small board which buses all its students to another school division was unconcerned about salaries because "the board pays tuition to have its children attend school in another town." The minutes of one board contained a motion

> to make strong representation through the SSTA to the provincial government to appoint equal members of trustees

and provincial government representatives on the trustee/ government bargaining committee.

This motion was made despite the fact that the board received more than 50% of its funding from the province. Copies of the motion were sent to the minister of education and all MLA's. The chairman of a small board favoured "bargaining directly with teachers rather than through the government/ trustee bargaining committee." He argued that because a board's greatest expense is teachers' salaries the negotiation should be direct; he did not particularly favour a 5/4 trustee/government ratio on the bargaining committee. These trustees concluded that financial assistance would not erode local control over education.

In speaking of dismissal of teachers as it relates to local control of education five officials indicated that while section 206 of The Education Act could impede removal of non-tenured teachers it would not prevent them from seeking to remove undesirable teachers through mutual agreement with them. Only one official had been involved with the dismissal of a teacher in an incident that he called "messy." All these officials thought that the power given the board of reference looking into teacher dismissals could be excessive.

All trustees interviewed perceived section 48 of the regulations pertaining to the Act to interfere with a board's right to insist that teachers are responsible for a school's noon-hour supervision. In fact, two boards of education were

seeking an injunction from a Court of Queen's Bench judge to prohibit teachers from withdrawing noon-hour supervision services in their respective divisions. Mr. Justice Halverson (1983:A15) has refused one injunction saying that teachers are under no statutory obligation to perform the service. Further,

> if there is to be a statutory duty upon teachers to relinquish their lunch break to provide noon-hour supervision without extra compensation then it is the responsibility of the legislature to so stipulate in the clearest language, and it is not the function of the court to accomplish this by judicial construction of vague legislation.

Section 48 requires that a board shall have a "responsible person provide noon-hour supervision." Trustees have become incensed with what they perceive as teachers shirking a longstanding, traditional responsibility to supervise during noon-hours. As one trustee in a small division said

> teachers have assumed this responsibility for years now they don't want to do it anymore. The Act has changed the conditions of a teacher's work and boards couldn't prevent the change. We had no say....

Ironically, larger and medium-sized boards often employ non-teachers as noon-hour supervisors, and pay the extra cost of this practice.

Trustees in smaller divisions complained of the unavailability of persons other than teachers to perform the function and of the added cost of having to hire someone when available. One trustee of a small board said that few people in smaller towns "wanted to do noon-hour supervision." A second added that in "larger schools we'd need two

TABLE 15

Boards' Intentions to Communicate Dissatisfactions with the Act

	To Minister	To Parents	To SSTA	To Media
Large	2	0	2	0
Medium	1	0	2	0
Small	0	0	3	0

supervisors and at minimum wage we'd pay $1,800 a year" for supervision. A third felt that "next they'll not want to supervise recess and costs will be excessive," especially, he continued, "if we got [sic] to pay on some sort of shift basis." A fourth said that in some small towns "people just aren't available at noon-hours to do supervision."

Publicity

As Table 15 shows, fewer than half the board members interviewed indicate that their boards intended to publicize dissatisfactions with The Education Act. Larger boards intend to communicate directly with the minister of education and the SSTA, with the latter particularly at annual conventions. As for direct communication to the public the chairman of a large board remarked that

> as a rule we do not publicize directly to our ratepayers. The cost of newspaper advertisements is very high and the benefits questionable. Our board meetings are open to the public (as are all board meetings in Saskatchewan) and we usually have only a small attendance. As to our publicizing events leading up to the enactment of the Act we did not make such efforts because we did feel they would have been futile. The public in [our division] did have an opportunity to sit on the Law Review Committee, to attend our board meetings to hear discussions about the White Paper and so on, and to voice their concerns to their MLA's, etc. I understand that few private citizens did any of these things.

Board minutes for this board read, in part

> public meeting to be held to discuss school law review committee and have chairman make necessary presentations.

Neither this chairman, nor one of another large board, demonstrated any apparent dismay at the seeming lack of public attention to the Act or its consequences.

The chairman of a medium-sized board iterated what was contained in the minutes of a previous board meeting:

> The guy who wrote the Act didn't write it for boards or the public, he wrote it for the Department [of Education]. Publicity doesn't work because the only people who will respond are those in pressure groups whose interests are quite narrow. We would like to stay away from that...because we run the division for everyone not just them.

This same chairman confided that the public as a whole does not respond to publicity and that "pressure groups get in the way." Interviewees of many small boards merely indicated that their boards had not made any special efforts to publicize concerns. Two medium and three small boards intend to communicate dissatisfaction to the SSTA. A review of the resolutions submitted to the SSTA annual conventions for the years 1980-81-82 showed that a great many boards submit resolutions annually and inform the SSTA and other boards of their concerns. In each of the years checked between 72% and 78% of the resolutions were related to The Education Act.

Satisfactions

Two large, two medium, and one small boards' trustees expressed satisfaction with the inclusion of section 146 of the Act. It requires that all pupils' records shall be held in confidence, but that a pupil with his parents or guardian shall have access to them under conditions prescribed by the board of education. Trustees believed that this section would force all boards to develop policies about pupils' records, something which they did not have to do under

repealed legislation and over which some confusion as to pupils' rights did exist.

All persons interviewed stated, but only after prompting, that now that The Education Act contains definitive responsibilities and duties for pupils a better balance exists between them and pupils' rights. Two trustees and one official believed that pupils all-too-frequently learned their rights by watching television and that their perceptions of them were sadly distorted. Still, they cautioned that teachers and officials could be confused by particular sections of the Act which, in their estimations, defined pupils' rights but unclearly.

Post-Enactment Activities

Interviewees were asked to describe what political activities their boards have undertaken since passage of The Education Act and whether they would place demands on the political system in the future.

All evidence indicates that the number of demands and frequency of interest articulations that trustees have placed on the political system in order to assuage their dissatisfactions has been minimal. Only the two large boards, one medium, and one small board which have pursued their interests prevent trustees' political activities from being non-existent. Their demands were articulated in writing and in person to the various components of the political system.

Trustees from two large, one medium, and one small boards indicated their willingness to engage in political activities of the same type as they had engaged in the past. These boards would continue to write directly to education ministers, invite them and their officials to discuss matters of local concern, and address concerns to the SSTA. Trustees from smaller boards said they would continue to rely on the SSTA as mediator between them and the provincial government.

As examination of the SSTA journal, School Trustee, showed that trustees continue to use the SSTA annual convention as their forum in which to express their concerns particularly through resolutions attacking the efficacy of government legislation.

SSTA Activities

The political activities of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association were not central to the purpose of this study. This organization is an example of what Almond and Powell (1978) have called an associational interest group. Because the SSTA is an organization representative of school boards interests brief note was made of its activities during the developmental days of the White Paper and The Education Act.

Evidence suggests that the SSTA was vocal in its condemnation of the White Paper and, in particular, the tenure proposals it contained. For example, the following are excerpts from the SSTA's journal:

> Because our schools are instrumental in determining the quality of our citizens, our governments have no more business telling us how to educate our children than they have telling us who shall represent us.
>
> The White Paper, despite its stated purpose of promoting the exercise of legislative and judicial functions by boards of education obviously distrusts our abilities to govern ourselves.
>
> The Saskatchewan White Paper on School Law...serves as a clear statement that the civil service completely lacks understanding of the role of government and the rights of the individual. The paper provides for the civil service a blank cheque which permits them [sic] to dictate the course of action of elected people at the local level.

A further statement said:

> The primary purpose of school government is to determine the goals of its educational system and to assemble and manage the resources necessary to attainment [sic] of those goals in the most efficient and effective manner. In our school systems, the management of human resources or people is central. Any intrusion upon the ability of the school boards to manage impairs the board's ability to meet its goals. That a school board's ability to manage is reduced by the tenure proposal is beyond dispute.

An official of the SSTA made the following comment:

> The proposed Act made real losers of everyone. The greatest loss and greatest disservice is to students in the classroom and to the rights of parents. Students have been abandoned. The rights of parents in the public school system to have a meaningful role with respect to education of their children is lost.

The official thought that the Act would take away school boards' authority to develop programs of instruction with the authority reverting to the Department of Education. He also believed the Act would destroy teacher professionalism.

After enactment of the Act an official made these comments:

> The Act provides a good starting point for establishing a sound local government structure. There are a number of areas in which our Association will continue to press for improvement.

He noted one area of change:

> An important area in which statutory change should be urged is that respecting the regulation-making power of the Minister, or in effect, the Department of Education. As written it would permit the department to promulgate regulations in many areas of decision-making which have been specifically assigned by the Act itself to school boards. Regulations have equal effect in law as statutory provisions. It seems clear that in future years our Association should strive to have the authority to legislate by regulation made consistent with the remainder of the Act.

As the aforementioned findings suggest, the outright condemnation of the legislation proposed in the White Paper softened somewhat after the Act become law. Indeed, the SSTA seemed to find less fault with the Act than it had with the White Paper. Oddly, the substantive changes to the White Paper that became The Education Act were few. The tenure provisions were not changed at all!

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 4

This chapter contains the findings of the study. In general, trustees and officials were more plaintive than praising of the White Paper and The Education Act. The research identified numerous sections of these documents which created, at least in the perceptions of interviewees, problems and difficulties for education in Saskatchewan. No concensus exists among trustees interviewed that control of education has been centralized because of the Act; however,

not all trustees were convinced that the government responsible for designing the Act lived up to the minister's stated commitment to decentralized control of education. Trustees appeared to be caught in a semantic argument, with several equating control with autonomy and several claiming that the minister equivocated by equating decentralization with redistribution of responsibility.

Trustees made two claims about control. First, where government funding is substantial control appears to be centralized. Second, where government funding is not substantial government appears to usurp control in other ways. Examples cited were by making directors report to the minister of education, designing principals' management styles, negating trustee effectiveness on the provincial bargaining team, and revoking their traditional authority to dismiss non-tenured teachers.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter contains the conclusions of the study. Prior to data collection a statement of purpose, a problem, and eight sub-problem statements were created. This chapter is organized so that the problem statement is answered and the purpose satisfied.

Cost and time factors often prohibit the collection of data from an entire population under study, so that researchers frequently resort to less prohibitive techniques of sampling the population. The desire to generalize the findings discovered with the sample used in the study is often a principal one for researchers. Any generalization must be made cautiously as no absolute guarantee exists that the sample selected truly represents the entire population under study. Errors can creep into a study which detract not only from the quality of the findings but also from the goodness of any generalization. Precautions, noted in Chapter 3, were taken during the construction of the questionnaire, sampling procedures, and collection of data to ensure that errors were eliminated and that findings could be generalized from the sample to the entire population from which it was taken.

SUB-PROBLEM 1

What demands did school boards, their officials, or other knowledgeable persons in Saskatchewan put on the political system during time of development of the White Paper on consolidation and revision of the province's educational legislation?

Merritt and Coombs (1977:248) remarked that

> undoubtedly the biggest stumbling block to have been removed in the last two decades was the once prevalent notion that educational reform did not have much to do with politics.... Today, the point that there is a political aspect to educational reform scarcely need be argued.

Revision and consolidation of provincial educational legislation must qualify as an educational reform of great magnitude in which political participation has room for an unrestricted number of actors. The findings of this study show that, as sampled, the majority of school boards, their trustees, and their officials made no demands on the political system during the time of revision and consolidation of Saskatchewan's educational legislation. Consequently, this majority had no evident influence upon the reformation of school law and the development of the regulative output, The Education Act; neither did the minority which made demands on the political system appear to have overt influence on the development of the Act.

The reasons why most boards made no demands on the political system are not clear. As one interviewee commented

in confidence that "smart boards did what the SSTA told them to do". Perhaps the SSTA directed its member boards to channel demands to government through it. Directive demand-making of this type, while legitimate, does not ensure that the local needs for which they might account reach government decision-makers. Evidence has suggested that large and medium sized boards did voice their concerns directly to the minister of education and to the Department of Education bureaucracy. Smaller boards did not make demands in this manner.

As a collectivity, smaller boards of education represent by far the largest proportion of Saskatchewan's population. Individually, their reluctance to make demands may have resulted from a general inability to generate sufficient levels of what Almond and Powell (1978:11) called participant and subject supports. The findings showed, for example, that while trustees from small boards were concerned about the government's intention to change educational legislation many of them were only vaguely familiar, and some completely unfamiliar, with the contents of the White Paper or Bills 22 and 44. Trustees of larger boards availed themselves of reports and briefs prepared by board officials, large boards having had the financial wherewithall to afford staff specialists to prepare them. Clearly, the large boards could support their demands more easily than small boards. The latter's demand-making might have been restricted by support constraint.

In any case, the demands made by school boards, and the SSTA, appeared not to alter to any significant extent the White Paper that preceded passage of The Education Act. A section by section comparison of the White Paper and the Act revealed only minor variations to wording. For example, none of the demands made by boards or the SSTA about the major issues of teacher dismissal, collective bargaining, or funding of education produced changes considered satisfactory by trustees. Evidence of their dissatisfaction surfaced at the 1982 SSTA annual convention where trustees resolved

> that this convention ask the Minister of Education to amend The Education Act so that the authority of the board of reference to investigate the termination of a teacher's contract would be limited to making a judgment as to whether the teacher received due process thereby leaving judgments of performance to the board of education.

One can question whether this type of demand-making, unbolstered by constant and persistent pressure on the minister and his officials to produce the sought after amendments, will ever lead to changes desired by trustees.

The issues of who is to be chief executive officer, elections to the board of education, principals assigning duties in consultation with staff, and the minister convening boards of reference were not resolved through trustee demand-making. No evidence has been discovered to suggest that dissatisfied trustees will pursue these matters. Given the concern stated by at least one official that the chief executive officer might be in a position, because of the Act, to usurp boards' powers, trustees perhaps should reconsider

their silence on the C.E.O. designation.

Furthermore, as trustees and officials indicated and the SSTA demonstrated conflict appears to exist among various sections of the megapolicy, the regulations, and school board policy. No one involved with this study appeared to demand that this conflict be resolved. The opportunity clearly existed after release of the White Paper for boards to study the proposed megapolicy, identify disparity, and pressure government to change the megapolicy so that possible conflict would be eliminated. Boards may have to bear the burden of failing at least to attempt to inform government of sources of conflict.

Boards that made demands of the SSTA were engaged in legitimate demand-making, but as a political venture such activity will not guarantee that their demands reach the levels of government in which policy is made. Hence, such demand-making is weak and possibly inefficient.

In summary, school boards generally did not make demands on the political system. Those that did could not be certain that their demands reached executive levels of government. Consequently, the lack of demand-making would seriously reduce any influence that boards had on the development of either the White Paper or The Education Act.

SUB-PROBLEM 2

What participant supports did school boards, their officials, or other knowledgeable persons add to the

political system in order to enhance their demands?

Dahl (1963:6) called a political system

> any persistent pattern of human relationships that involves to a significant extent power, rule, or authority and in which are to be found roles, endowed with authority, played by persons who create, interpret, and enforce rules that are binding on members of the political system.

School trustees and their boards are members of the political system. They can, when they choose, make demands on it. In writing about demands Almond and Powell (1978:11) said they are "not enough to keep a political system operating." Actors in the system who generate demands must support them, with support arising from a variety of resources that the actors need available or must make available. McKeough (1976:192) said that

> theoretically, there is a clear, sharp distinction between policy and administration. The theorist tells us that the elected person decides the policy and the civil servant administers it.... The fact...that a minister is ...the direct employer of his deputy minister...represents ...administration. Any the very fact that a deputy minister advises a minister...indicates that he has a hand in policy making.

Ministers and deputy ministers seem to be the most logical persons in the political system at whom to direct demands.

Trustees, and the SSTA, would have to support their demands in order to enhance the likelihood of their reaching the ministerial levels of government. Evidence suggest that participant supports were virtually non-existent, with the exception of two large, a medium, and a small board which did support their demands. In many instances trustees relied on

their interest group, the SSTA, to carry demands to government. Support in these instances is indirect and largely derivative of membership fees. The few boards which attempted to meet the public, ostensibly to explain their positions and garner support for them, were disappointed by poor turnouts. Speculation is that the public was poorly informed of these boards' desires to meet with them. But, as MacKinnon (1960:11) suggested people may be more impressed by the large system of centralized control of education and ignore or refuse to participate in the local system of decentralized control. Perhaps people stayed away because they are unimpressed by trustees' roles in the education system. Possibly, individual boards did not lend support to the few demands they made because they did not have sufficient resources, particularly smaller boards whose human resources in no way compare to those of large or medium boards. Still, even small boards had opportunities to invite minister or their officials to speak at their meetings, had opportunities to advertise their concerns in local newspapers or on local radio and seek public support for their positions, or had opportunities to send delegates to lobby cabinet ministers. That so many boards did none of these things suggests they made less than adequate efforts to take their concerns to government.

SUB-PROBLEM 3

How did school boards, their officials, or other knowledgeable persons articulate their interests with respect to revision and consolidation of the province's educational legislation?

An SSTA editorial (1981:5) contained these comments:

> The ability to get something extra from government is considered proper and respectable. We call it lobbying* and we have "professional"* lobbyists...there should be no need to instruct school trustees or any other groups for that matter in how to persuade other governments to treat schools and education impartially and fairly.... One of the purposes of school trustees is to ensure that schools and education get the attention and the priority that their importance in society deserves.

All Saskatchewan school boards share membership in the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association. An interesting enigma arises because of this membership: While the SSTA is the representative organization of boards and can and frequently does represent the collective needs of boards to government, individual boards, as entities with their own peculiar interests that reflect local needs for education, can but usually do not represent their own individual interests to governments. As Meranto (1967:8) commented, groups must interact with politicians if they are to gain legislation favourable to themselves.

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*emphasis in original.

Clearly, the SSTA makes a public statement that boards are free to lobby the provincial government; however, the conclusion based on findings of this study is that school boards generally did not initiate or participate in discussion with ministers or government officials about revision and consolidation of school law. Except for two large school boards, one medium, and one small board, boards of education did not articulate interests relevant to concerns they had for government's proposed changes to the legislation.

Excepting the board whose member served on the minister's advisory committee, not one board appeared to make persistent or consistent articulation of its demands in the political system. That several boards relied completely on the SSTA to articulate common interests raises the question "what are their common interests". Some boards were, perhaps, satisfied with all the proposed changes to the legislation. The presence of a formal organization, the SSTA, which envelopes the individual boards may have precluded their autonomous and uninhibited articulation of certain local interests. Witness the comment that "smart boards do what the SSTA tells them to do."

The relationship between the SSTA and its member boards is what Almond and Powell (1978:175) called an associational interest group. It has a full-time staff, specialized internal roles focused around interest

articulation, and an orderly procedure for formulation of interests and demands. If this relationship were to inhibit boards from articulating their interests directly to the minister or deputy then one can question whether boards so inhibited have fulfilled their obligation to advance the educational needs of their school divisions.

Interest articulation directed by boards to the SSTA is a legitimate political activity. If the SSTA does not promote the interests, then their efficacy is, to say the least, questionable. A comparison of the White Paper and The Education Act clearly showed that changes between the former and the latter were either minor drafting changes or, from trustees' points of view, insignificant ones. Housego (1972:38) said that in provincial politics of interest groups, major interest groups, the STF, SSTA, and the Department of Education, are free to articulate their interests and reach a compromise on important matters of province-wide scope. Little compromise appears to have arisen during the revision and consolidation of Saskatchewan's school law. The reason might be found in an argument proposed by Stapleton (1977:39) who said that "within a department of education the bureaucratic sub-systems influence the policy which is developed." The bureaucratic interest group is powerful and it appears "to want to work independent of groups such as trustees, and politicians become only rubber stamps of senior civil servants."

Furthermore, the bureaucracy has the resources some of which it uses to divert the participant supports and energies of trustee groups to bargain and negotiate the resolution of problems that are ancillary to the major issues. In doing so, those groups expend their limited resources to articulate interests on matters which are not central to the major issues and their influence on major issues is limited.

In summary, considering the importance attributed to wholesale reformation of Saskatchewan's school law one might conclude that school boards were weak in their efforts to persuade the government to meet their demands for change to the legislation.

SUB-PROBLEM 4

Are school boards, their officials, and other knowledgeable persons satisfied or dissatisfied with The Education Act, or with specific actions of the Act, as it relates to governance and control of education in Saskatchewan.

Continuum of Control

The findings lead to the conclusion that boards and their officials were generally satisfied with the provincial government's intention to revise and consolidate Saskatchewan's school law. Some of the specific dissatisfactions with the regulative output, The Education Act, did relate to governance of education but evidence in

the findings is inconclusive as to whether trustees and officials perceived changes in the continuum of control of education. Certainly no concensus is evident.

Attempting to generalize findings about control is difficult; however, two events, both involving regulation of teachers, have occurred in Saskatchewan which suggest that The Education Act has actually centralized the control of education.

Teacher regulation. Section 205 makes all regulations and the Act itself part of the terms of teachers' employment with a board of education. Trustees argued that this section, when read with certain other sections of the Act, would hinder a board's ability to regulate teachers' duties and responsibilities. Their foresight proved accurate. A few weeks after collection of the data for this study teachers in two school divisions questioned, in Saskatchewan's Court of Queen's Bench, their boards' right to assign them noon-hour supervisory duties. Judgment for the teachers, Mr. Justice Halvorson (1983:A15) stating that neither the Act nor its regulations specify that teachers must provide noon-hour supervision. Unless specifically intended by the legislation, and so stated, that they must be noon-hour supervisors teachers need not be. This decision places to rest a long-standing tradition in Saskatchewan, particularly in rural divisions, of teacher-supervised noon-hours in schools. The new Act has been interpreted

strictly by the courts and the interpretation alters the boards' control over teachers' supervisory responsibilities. On the other hand, teacher regulation is affected by a board of reference decision to reinstate a teacher, despite dismissal based on due process required by the statute because, as one official commented, "the public had not complained about the teacher." The nature of this decision, made by a quasi-judicial body, is contrary to the nature of the one made by the courts. The courts' interpretation seemed to apply the statute strictly; the reference board's interpretation seemed to ignore the statute.

These decisions suggest that school boards have relinquished some control over teachers and, subsequently, that the focus on the continuum of control has shifted centrally.

Teacher contract negotiations. Teacher contract negotiations in Saskatchewan are done province-wide by means of a bargaining committee. Section 230(1) of the Act places five government bargainers, four trustee bargainers, and four teacher bargainers onto the negotiation committee. Trustees' complaints that they are virtually powerless on the committee may be justified. As government makes concessions to teachers, trustees find themselves in the unenviable position of having to pay for them. Of course, government will not indulge teachers' every demand but in order to obtain what they would deem a fairly negotiated settlement trustees might

have to resort to extra-curricular lobbying, a political activity which the findings of this study suggest they have not mastered. The 5/4 split at the bargaining table is nothing short of government sanctioned erosion of trustees' control of teachers' contracts.

The reference to the 5/4 split is of some interest. Not one respondent mentioned teachers' presence on the provincial bargaining committee; consequently, interviews dealt with a 5/4 rather than a 5/4/4 representation. If this omission was due to oversight, then trustees might do well to realize that they and teachers may have occasion to oppose jointly the government members on some issues. On the other hand, a deliberate omission of a 5/4/4 split suggests either that trustees cannot see themselves as teachers' allies or that they would not admit to the likelihood of such an alliance.

Continuum of Control. Education Minister McArthur (1981:20) said that he personally supported

> decentralization and the sharing of educational responsibilities within the province. This is why The Education Act places more responsibility on trustees... than any other school act in Canada.... Our commitment to decentralized and shared decision-making makes Saskatchewan unique among Canadian provinces.

No claim was made by the government that The Education Act really did decentralize control of education; such a statement might have been inaccurate. As McArthur pointed out the Act has shifted some responsibilities: to boards, to pupils, to principals, and to directors. But government's

commitment to shift responsibility is not identical to one to decentralize control.

Eidness (1982:4) noted that under Saskatchewan's repealed legislation the secretary-treasurer of a school unit was its chief executive officer and his power often crossed into the realm of the superintendent. Superintendents were usually government employees and secretary-treasurers were usually local board employees. Under the new Act directors of education (the previously called superintendents) are hired by local boards and their duties and powers assigned by local boards as matters of board policy. As chief executive officers the directors presumably have power to control secretary-treasurers. Eidsness (1982:6) has identified the conflict that has arisen between the director and secretary-treasurer because of this power and he commented on the quickness with which some directors have assumed the dominant power position in the school division. An anomaly arises in that the chief executive officer is responsible to the board not only to assist in developing policy and goals for education but also to implement the former and achieve the latter. Where board members are uncertain of their corporate responsibilities the professional administrators can control local educational affairs.

The minister of education has legislated authority to demand written reports direct from the chief executive

officer so that his power is definitely not without limit; ironically, the legislation does not require the chief executive officer to prepare reports for his employers. Presumably, boards of education will, as a matter of policy, require their directors to prepare reports for them. But in smaller divisions where reliance upon the director is paramount in the development of their policy and their operation the professional administrators may have undue influence which will not necessarily reflect the needs of the electors while the boards bear responsibility to the electors for directors' influence.

Coleman (1977:79) saw power and influence in education in Canada shifting away from trustees, the provincial government, and administrators towards teachers' associations, special interest groups, and students. The Education Act appears to have averted this shift in Saskatchewan and re-established centralized control of education with pockets of local control resting potentially with directors of education. In any case, contrary to the opinions of Cabinet ministers and bureaucrats, board of education control appears to have diminished since passage of The Education Act. Coleman (1977:83) said that

> trustees are elected representatives but often they don't behave as representatives. Once elected they often appear to act as independents.... The bureaucracy within the school system may be more representatives than the elected representatives.

Saskatchewan's Act may produce this type of representation, much to the chagrin of trustees.

In his reflections on civic administration in general Dais (1977:15) assumed that, while it might be efficient and elected representatives are motivated [illegible] act as representatives

> one must still question whether local government is going forward toward improving and preserving the quality of life. This has to do, in part, if representative accountability is sufficiently responsive in satisfying or otherwise processing the legitimate demands of all the electorate. The electorate may be ignored by the representatives. The elected may refuse to call public hearings. The elected may practise secrecy.

Presthus (1978:252) has stated that interest groups must articulate collective social demands to the government elite. School boards are special interest groups who are supposed to represent the social (read educational) demands of local ratepayers. The "do nothing" practices and the "leave it to the SSTA" stances taken by so many boards, the failure to call public meetings notwithstanding the commonly poor attendance, the protection of board minutes from outsiders are attitudes that may symptomatically describe a decay in traditionalist local control of education in Saskatchewan. These factors may have prompted the government to enact legislation which is, as Harker (1978:40) called it, "a response to the public call for more direct government involvement in prescribing specific educational goals." As Bryce, et al (1979:VIII) noted

> the literature suggests that dimensions of local control are not exercised to their limit and that at times there is an emphasis on monitoring and routine activities to the detriment of emphasis on goal setting and policy making.

The findings of this study support the contention that local control dimensions are not exercised to their limit. Perhaps the provincial government, aware of a resultant slackness in local control, has used The Education Act to enhance its own ability to govern education so that policy and goal setting would be properly tended to.

SUB-PROBLEM 5

What alterations do school boards, their officials, and other knowledgeable persons believe the regulative output, i.e., The Education Act, has had on their ability to govern and control education in Saskatchewan.

For the purpose of this study The Education Act was considered to be a regulative output in the nature described by Almond and Powell (1978:12) as "regulations of behaviour, which may take various forms." Demands and supports are converted into outputs in the "process level of the political system," and regulative outputs can have tremendous effects on the social order. The findings of this study suggest that trustees are ambivalent about their ability to govern education. On a high note, trustees who considered their boards to be "progressive" decision and policy makers did not feel that the Act encroached severely on their traditional

controls. Progressive boards seemed willing to cope with the times and use whatever powers the regulative output conferred on them to the limit. Smaller boards, especially those whose finances are largely of provincial government origin, appeared to have resigned themselves to having lost control of the important matters in education years ago. Furthermore, larger boards seemed less willing to surrender their powers than smaller boards, perhaps because their participant supports are more readily available, and they seemed more willing to approach government with demands with which they wished to shape the final form of the regulative output. Interestingly, trustees and officials did not consider the tenure/non-tenure issue would significantly imperil local autonomy, as did the SSTA.

More salient than tenure issues is the question of public confidence in schools as it was raised by some respondents. Several trustees conceded that ratepayers concern for educational affairs is generally not highly visible. Witness the poor attendance at special meetings called to discuss the White Paper. Is the lack of public concern a symptom of its lack of confidence in the system or confusion about its operation? In either case, one has to wonder at the pertinence of the local autonomy issue. Local governance implies that boards' decisions will reflect ratepayers' demands. When the public does not inform trustees of its demands or trustees do not seek them out one

might be correct to assume that it has neither confidence in the school system nor understanding of its operation. If, as MacKinnon (1973:167) suggested, ratepayers are looking more to a centralized system of control of education then questions of trustees' ability to govern are read in a different light. One impression is that trustees are being by-passed in the political process of demand-making, conversion, and output generation. A second one is that government legislation and regulations account for boards' diminished importance as local policy-makers. As a concession, the provincial government has appeared to allow boards to "save face" by identifying and specifying certain areas of decision-making which create new responsibilities but that are deficient of concommitant authority. Local control of education may truly have become the mythical entity about which Hodgson (1976:250) wrote.

SUB-PROBLEMS 6 AND 7

What demands and interest articulations have school boards, their officials, and other knowledgeable persons placed on the political system since enactment of The Education Act?

What future demands and interest articulations do school boards, their officials, and other knowledgeable persons plan to place on the political system in regard to The Education Act?

As the findings showed only two large boards, one medium, and one small board remained politically active after the Act's passage. Several boards (some of those included in the study, several not) continue to use the SSTA annual convention to air their concerns. Whether the SSTA convention is a public forum is questionable, even when issues discussed are published in the journal. Whether local needs for education are sufficiently and adequately dealt with by resolutions is questionable. Whether resolutions reached the political system at a level involving provincial government participation is doubtful. Finally, one can wonder whether boards generally have become complacent in their roles as representatives of the public interest and, as a result, the interest is not fully expounded.

The survival of local autonomy of school boards will depend upon government recognition of its merits; such recognition cannot be gained by once yearly resolutions passed through the collective voice of an SSTA assembly. It also depends upon public acceptance of its value as a practical vehicle with which to inject local needs into the political system for discussion and solution. This acceptance cannot be gained by boards who take little or no part in educational affairs of the magnitude of revision and consolidation of a province's educational legislation.

SUB-PROBLEM 8

What influence did school boards, their officials, and other knowledgeable persons have on the revision and consolidation of school law in Saskatchewan?

The findings of this study lead to the conclusion that school boards', officials', and other knowledgeable persons' influence on the revision and consolidation of Saskatchewan's school law was, between January 1, 1976 and December 31, 1979, minimal. The White Paper was a preview of government's megapolicy on education. A comparison between it and the megapolicy, a regulative output call The Education Act, indicated that changes to the White Paper were insignificant. The insignificance of the changes is evidence of minimal influence.

The majority of boards involved with this study did little, either directly or indirectly through their officials, to place demands on or articulate interests in the political system. If the generalization holds true that boards not involved in the study were equally as inactive, then one may conclude reasonably that a province-wide dearth of political activity existed. Such inactivity would be sufficient reason for boards' minimal influence on the revision and consolidation of school law.

A second reason for minimal influence is attributed to lack of persistent and consistent pressure on government by those boards which did act politically. A few letters or

phone calls would not go unnoticed by a minister or senior bureaucrats but would not create the same impression as continuous reminders that dissatisfactions have to be remedied.

A third reason for minimal influence might lie with the SSTA. It might not have the political clout that other associational interest groups have. Certainly it has a collectivity of resources that individual boards do not have. Boards that rely on it, particularly smaller ones, cannot be sure that their concerns are addressed at ministerial or senior bureaucratic levels of government. Hence, their interests articulated to the SSTA are not necessarily articulated to government.

In general, school boards involved with this study did not act well as pressure or interest groups. If the generalization to boards not involved with the study holds, then boards province-wide did not act well as pressure or interest groups. Ostensibly, their influence on the revision and consolidation of Saskatchewan's school law would be minimal.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 5

The stated purpose of this study was to examine political activities of school boards and relate them to the boards' influence on the revision and consolidation of school law in Saskatchewan. This purpose has been satisfied through

answers to eight sub-problems and one problem. Evidence conclusively indicated that from January 1, 1976 to December 31, 1979, school boards which participated in this study engaged in minimal political activity aimed at influencing the revision and consolidation of Saskatchewan school law. Influence of these boards appears to have been minimal.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS

This Chapter contains implications for future research included in a review of the methodology and conceptual framework of the study.

Methodology

The methodology used to collect interview data for this study was a stratified random sample and nomination technique. Precautions were taken to reduce errors and permit the greatest generalization of findings. Reliability was enhanced by review of school board minutes in each instance where interviews were done. Efforts to include two of four large boards in this study seemed reasonable and are defensible, at least in part, in that all four are urban. To include all four was thought excessive: each is comparatively wealthy in resources, both human and financial; each could, if it chose, place sustained demands on the political system and support them. The four boards represent

about thirty-one percent of Saskatchewan's population. The conclusions of this study are, therefore, more likely generalizable within the stratum of the large school boards and therein lies the major strength of this study's findings.

The sampling of only nine of the small boards may be this study's greatest weakness, in particular considering that one small board refused to participate citing an illegal reason for doing so. School law in Saskatchewan makes all school board minutes public documents, thus no board legally can refuse to open them to anyone, "outsider" or whomever. The writer decided for three reasons not to pursue the refusal of the small board to allow at least a review of its minutes:

1. the board chairman obviously would not allow himself or anyone else to be interviewed; therefore, reviewing the minutes, even if access were permitted, seemed to be a waste of time;

2. the board was located several hundred miles from the writer's locale. To go to it and be refused either/or access and an interview seemed to be too costly an undertaking;

3. the writer probably could have obtained court ordered access to the minutes but only at significant cost so rejected the possibility.

In the end, the decision not to pursue the refusal of one small board seems justifiable in view of hostility and great cost.

Saskatchewan contains many small boards of education, all rural, that represent about forty percent of its population. By using only nine of the 105 small boards one has to be cautious in generalizing the findings within this stratum.

Six of the province's ten medium sized boards were asked to participate in the study and five did. These boards are a mixture of rural and urban and represent about twenty-nine percent of the province's population. The representativeness of the five participating medium boards and the generalizability of the findings in this stratum appear well-founded.

In aggregate, small boards out-number large and medium boards but they generally have neither the human or financial resources of large and medium boards. One implication is that large boards have the potential to influence the development of school law through application of large amounts of their resources whereas small boards do not. Medium boards might have a potential in between. Where large boards, that represent essentially urban-oriented ratepayers, do successfully influence the development of school law one has to be aware of the effects on smaller, rural communities. For one thing, the needs of large, urban cities may be significantly different than small, rural towns or villages. Interests articulated by large school boards may not reflect the needs identified by small, rural boards.

Where small boards do not articulate interests the needs of their ratepayers may be going unsatisfied.

Researchers who intend to study small school boards in the future might consider using a larger, and possibly more representative, sample of such boards than was used in this study.

Saskatchewan School Trustees Association.

As the purpose of this study was to look at political activities of individual school boards, the political activities of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association were not given detailed attention. The researcher did not deny either the possible significance or importance of the SSTA's political activities vis a vis revision and consolidation of Saskatchewan school law but did not consider them central to the purpose of the study. Indeed, evidence discovered during the study showed the SSTA to have played a role in the development of school law with recognition of the role made in the findings and conclusions.

Perhaps a study of the SSTA as a pressure group, interest group, or lobby group would be appropriate. Such study might help explain why Saskatchewan school boards, on the whole, did not appear to have significant influence in the development of The Education Act in Saskatchewan.

Exclusion of the SSTA from the central purpose of the study was deliberate and is defensible. First, studies of boards' activities do exist (Renihan, 1977; Enns, 1963) as do

studies of school board associational interest group activities (Stringham, 1974; Campbell, 1976). The former disclose almost no evidence of boards' political activities. The latter disclose clear evidence of boards' associational interest group political activities. Second, the researcher's genuine interest was to see whether boards did act politically in Saskatchewan from January 1, 1976 to December 31, 1979. As the evidence has shown only minimal political activity, and it apparently limited to larger school boards, what may interest future researchers is why boards, especially smaller ones, were not more politically active. This study contains speculative reasons only. What may also be of interest, particularly in light of the finding that the SSTA would clearly have no objection, is whether school boards have any ambitions to become politically active.

The Conceptual Framework

Almond and Powell's model of the performance of a political system was an appropriate conceptual framework for this study. Modification of the model might be appropriate in order to give a clearer representation of the political performance of school boards in Saskatchewan. The modifications, shown in Figure 2, are intended to guide future research by removing some of the assumptions inherent in Almond and Powell's model and replacing them with either qualitatively or quantitatively varifiable variables.

Inherent in Almond and Powell's (1978:10) model of political performance are the following assumptions:

1. individuals or groups have a capacity to become aware of an event or issue that can provoke political activity;

2. individuals or groups have a capacity to become interested in an event or issue that can provoke political activity;

3. individuals or groups have a capacity to act on their own behalf;

4. individuals or groups are prompted to act by interest in an event or issue;

5. the activity can be political in nature, and when it is a discernible process of political activity is identifiable;

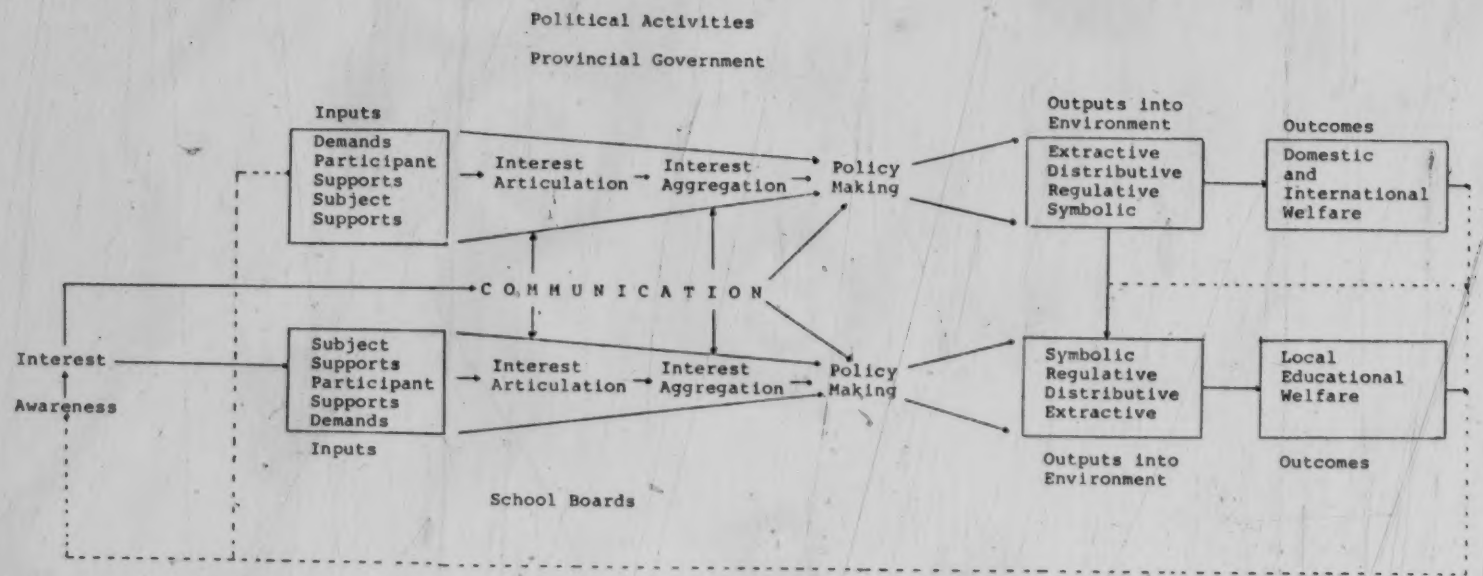
6. the political activity may or may not lead to desired ends.

As Almond and Powell's model was depicted in Figure 1 it was somewhat deficient for the purpose of this study. Figure 2 presents a model which may, because of the addition of the elements interest, awareness, and social activity, be more precise in its description of school board activities.

As Figure 2 shows school boards' political activities will depend in part upon their reactions to provincial government policy making and subsequent outputs and outcomes. The provincial government can also react to school

FIGURE 2

The Political Performance of School Boards and Provincial Government



board policy making. In Figure 2 awareness and interest are assumed to exist with a provincial government that initiates political activity toward creating a regulative output. Communication is dependent upon school boards' desires and efforts to create and sustain it. Both groups are able to communicate their desires each to the other at any stage of the political process. This model does not account for their ability to communicate with other groups such as parents, teachers, or associational interest groups. Such communication is a possibility and would if undertaken, be a legitimate political function.

As was noted in the study's findings, all boards were aware of pending revisions to school law. The study would have benefitted from a framework that was more explicit in its identification of awareness. Furthermore, identification of awareness is not to be equated to interest in influencing the revisions.

Allowing Almond and Powell's assumption that interest in an event or issue prompts political activity might have been misleading. As was noted in the findings boards were inclined toward little, if any, political activity even after incipient awareness of pending revisions. By relying on the guidance of the framework the researcher may have missed an important distinction: after their awareness were boards interested in pending revisions but did not act politically or were they not interested? Some way of identifying the moment of interest seems imperative.

Indeed, boards may have acted socially, or instructed their officials to do so, and so might have the nominees. For example, government plans might have been discussed without corporate authority. Officials might have been ordered to ascertain the sentiments of other officials. Nominees working on behalf of boards might have discussed government intentions at a social gathering. Almond and Powell's model did not allow the researcher to account for such activity. The model shown in Figure 2 can account for it.

Finally, the model presented in Figure 2 allows a researcher to account for activities of both school boards and government simultaneously. It shows that inter-relationships exist between each segment of political activity which can be enhanced by continual and persistent communication between government and boards.

If educational governance is to exist on a continuum of control somewhere between completely centralized control and completely localized control, the school boards and the provincial government must both be prepared to act in a political manner that ensures the continuum's existence. Placing demands, articulating interests, and sharing concerns about the regulative outputs are essential activities for both groups. As comes clear from the current study boards regularly passed up opportunities to act in a political manner; thus, they fail altogether or minimally influence the

development to educational legislation. Perhaps the most pressing question is if boards do not act politically or do so with minimal intensity are they failing to express the educational needs of the communities that they are elected to represent?

Boards of education may be politically inactive for any of several reasons. They may have no desire to act politically or, if they have the desire, lack resources to do so. Boards may be subject to SSTA guidelines that prohibit, or at least discourage, their participation in political activities. If such guidelines exist they do not appear to preclude the larger boards from dealing with the Minister of Education or senior bureaucrats, possibly because larger boards are less controllable than smaller ones. Perhaps the larger boards assume the lead in giving direction to the SSTA in a role as a politically-oriented associational interest group and smaller boards feel compelled only to follow. Then too, perhaps the White Paper generated so little political activity among school boards because most were satisfied with its contents.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I Background Information

I am interested in gathering some information about your background as a school board member (or official).

A. The Education Act was introduced on January 1, 1979.

(i) Have you been a school trustees (or official) of this board since January 1, 1979?

(ii) Were you a trustee (official) of this board prior to January 1, 1979? For how long?

(iii) Were you a member (official) of another board from January 1, 1976 to January 1, 1979?

B. Because my study deals with The Education Act I am interested generally in your familiarity with it.

(i) How would you rate your familiarity with the Act:

(a) thorough;
(b) moderate; or
(c) vague?

(ii) Are you more familiar with some sections of the Act than you are with others: with what sections?

II Pre-White Paper

1. Please describe to the best of your knowledge how your board became aware of the provincial government's intention to revise and consolidate school law.

2. What was your board's general reaction to the government's intention to revise and consolidate school law?

3. Prior to release of the White Paper on Revision and Consolidation of School Law did your board have any concerns about the government's intentions to revise and consolidate school law?

(i) Did any of your board members discuss these concerns with:

(a) the provincial government;
(b) the SSTA;
(c) the news media;
(d) the general public; or
(e) teachers in the board's employ?

(ii) Did your board enlist the aid of any agency, newspaper, radio or TV station, or other means in order to make clear its concerns about the government's intentions to revise and consolidate school law?

(iii) Did your board members ask the government to resolve their concerns:

(a) what did they ask the government to do?;
(b) what became of the requests?

(iv) Did your board members ask the SSTA to help them resolve their concerns:

(a) what did they ask the SSTA to do?;
(b) what became of the requests?

III Post-White Paper

I would appreciate some information about your board's activities that occurred after the White Paper was made public.

1. After the White Paper was made public in March, 1977, did your board members discuss its content at board meetings?

2. The White Paper was a formal preview of the provincial government's proposed new education legislation.

(i) Were there changes that your board wanted made in the government's proposed new legislation?

(ii) What were they?

3. (i) Did any member of your board attempt to contact the Minister of Education, Cabinet Members, or an M.L.A. in order to explain what changes the board wanted in the proposed legislation?

(ii) Did they

(a) write letters? How many or how frequently?;
(b) telephone? How frequently?;
(c) travel to the legislature to meet their contacts?; or
(d) invite an M.L.A., Cabinet Member, or the Minister of Education to visit with the board in order to hear of the board's concerns?

(iii) Did any members of your board contact the SSTA to explain your board's concerns about the White Paper's contents?

(a) by letter? How frequently?;
(b) by telephone? How frequently?; or
(c) in person?

(iv) After your board had considered the White Paper, did any members of your board explain the board's concerns about the proposed legislation to the news media, to teachers, or to the general public? If not, why not?

(v) Did the SSTA contact your board in order to explain concerns that it might have had about the contents of the White Paper?

4. Did your board establish any special committees whose purpose was to study the White Paper, Bill 44, or Bill 22 and report any special concerns to the board?

5. Were any members of your board involved in any study sessions or committees that were set up by the SSTA to study the White Paper, Bill 44 or Bill 22?

6. Were members of your board asked officially by the government to take part in prelegislation development of The Education Act? Did they participate?

7. Were there any major issues that were of particular interest to you during the time of development of the new Act which you believed should have been brought to the attention of the provincial government?

8. Did you know anyone in the Department of Education, or in the Cabinet, who might have been able to act on your behalf in regard to these issues?

(i) Did such a person actually act on your behalf in any manner?

9. (i) Did your board members want included in the proposed Act any special clauses, words, or phrases that they felt would resolve the major concerns they had about the proposed legislation?

(ii) Did the board submit the recommendations it had about special words, phrases, or clauses to

(a) the provincial government?; or
(b) the SSTA?

(iii) Have any of the words, phrases, or clauses been included in The Education Act?

(iv) Are you aware of the inclusion in the Act of any other boards' recommendations for special words, phrases, or clauses?

10. Did your board make its recommendations known to the general public either at board meetings or through the news media?

11. In your estimation, did trustees or the SSTA have sufficient opportunity to present their ideas for revision and consolidation of school law to the government?

IV Post Act

1. Are there any specific sections of The Education Act with which your board members are dissatisfied? Would you please describe them and the dissatisfactions.

2. I am interested in your reactions to The Education Act as they relate to governance of education in Saskatchewan. For example, has the Act altered school board members' ability to govern the local affairs of education compared to what their ability was under previous legislation?

3. Would you identify specific sections of The Education Act which altered school board members' ability to govern education.

4. Section 206 of the Act requires that a board give reasons for dismissing teachers, even non-tenured teachers. Under previous legislation only tenured teachers had to be shown reasons for dismissal.

   (i) Does this section do anything to board's ability to govern education?

   (ii) Did your board, under previous legislation, dismiss any teachers because of incompetence?

5. Has your board made its dissatisfactions with the Act known to:

   (a) the government?;
   (b) the Minister of Education?;
   (c) the public?;
   (d) the SSTA?; or
   (e) the media?

6. Does your board have plans with which to make its dissatisfaction known to the government in the future?

7. Finally, are there any sections of The Education Act with which your board is satisfied? Please describe the sections.

APPENDIX 2

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

School board minutes, kept according to The School Act, were scrutinized in order to determine the nature of school board activities related to revision and consolidation of educational legislation. A preconceived format was used to assist systematic analysis of the minutes. The format is outlined next.

I Years of interest: January 1, 1976 to December 31, 1979.

II Key words: Key words and phrases served to gain the researcher's attention and focus it onto aspects of the minutes pertinent to the study. These words are listed below:

White Paper
School Act (variants)
Education Act (variants)
educational legislation
legislation (variants)
M.L.A.
M.P.
government (variants)
minister (names of)
Department of Education
bureaucrats (variants)
law
politics
political activity including those mentioned by Almond and Powell
revision
consolidation
school boards
trustee
trustees' and boards'
local education
parental rights
concerns (variants)
communications (specific types)
lobby
interest
interest articulation
pressure
SSTA
satisfaction and dissatisfaction

change
instruction
governance (variants)
teachers
administrators
supervision (variants)
tradition

III Board Activities: Minutes were scrutinized to determine what activities, if any, boards undertook with regard to the revision and consolidation of educational legislation.

1. Did trustees undertake any activities which might be interpreted to be interest articulation?

(i) To whom were the activities directed?

(a) ministers;
(b) M.L.A.'s;
(c) civil servants;
(d) SSTA;
(e) school boards; or
(f) others?

(ii) By whom were the activities carried out?

(a) trustees;
(b) local officials;
(c) SSTA; or
(d) others?

(iii) What were the activities?

(a) phone calls;
(b) letter writing;
(c) personal visits; or
(d) informative
- to the media
- to parents
- to others?

IV 1. Did the minutes disclose whether trustees were satisfied or dissatisfied with:

(i) The process of legislative change?

(ii) The outcomes:

(a) the Act in general; or
(b) specific sections?

2. What is the nature of the satisfaction or dissatisfaction?

3. What action did trustees plan to take on satisfactions or dissatisfactions?

4. Specifically, during the 1979 year did trustees plan any political activity with respect to the outcome of the legislation changes?

APPENDIX 3

This Appendix contains a list of those sections of The Education Act, 1979 for which trustees cited concern.

SECTION	SECTION
7(b)(i)	169(2)
9(c)(i)	174
10(1)(a),(k)	175
19(1)(a)	176(1)
22(1)	199
38(1)	205
73	206(c)
88(1)	212
89(1), (2), (3)	214
90	221
89(1), (2), (3)	214
90	221
91(b), (c), (h), (j)	227
101(1)	230
104(a)	232
107	273(1), (2)
108	274(1)
109(1)	305(a), (b)
116	316
117(1)(b)	321
136(a), (c)	322
137(1), (2)	350(2)
138	
143(1)	
144(1)	
160	
164(2)	

APPENDIX 4

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Dear

I am making a study to learn what activities Saskatchewan School Trustees did to assist in the development of the province's Education Act. The study has been approved as part of a doctoral dissertation by the Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Administration, University of Alberta.

I am asking for your help to complete the study and would like you to participate in three ways:

1. Allow me to interview you and your officials about your Board's activities during the time period January 1, 1976 to December 31, 1979, inclusive;

2. Authorize me to review your Board's minutes for the same time period; and

3. Suggest the names of individuals in Saskatchewan who may have been directly involved in the revision and consolidation of educational legislation on behalf of trustees.

The interview can be done in about two hours. Your anonymity and the confidentiality of the interview are assured. Review of the minutes could be done either before or after the interview.

May I suggest that the interview and review of minutes be done at the school board office on:

Time: _____ Date: _____ Place: _____

Enclosed is a confirmation slip for this time, date and place. If any of the time, date or place are unsatisfactory please indicate a suitable alternative, including Saturday and Sunday, in the space provided on the slip.

The slip contains space for your suggestion of individuals who may have been involved in the revision and consolidation of educational legislation on behalf of trustees. Please return the slip in the stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Your assistance and participation are genuinely appreciated as the study cannot be completed successfully without them. Should you wish any clarification please do not hesitate to telephone me.

Yours sincerely,

Terry R. Gasior
(543-8221)

CONFIRMATION SLIP

( ) Confirmation

I confirm _____

at the school board office for an interview and review of school board minutes.

Please review the minutes before/after the interview.

OR

( ) Alternatives

The following dates and times are more suitable:

(a) _____

(b) _____

Please review the minutes before/after the interview.

The following persons were involved in the revision and consolidation of educational legislation on behalf of trustees:

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____